

Introduce the Grandkids to Gardening



by Noni Young

Kids love to learn. They love to see things grow and to get their hands dirty. And who best to teach them the art of gardening than their grandparents.

Even though we are heading into the cooler months of the year, here are some simple gardening activities for the grandchildren that can be done indoors or out.

Grow something from seed

Pick up some vegetable or plant seeds from your local nursery and grow them in a tray or jar containing seed raising mix. Beans are a great example as they have a relatively large seed and are fast growing. Kids will be able to watch the roots and shoots develop before their very eyes.

Propagate from cuttings

Showing kids how to grow on plants from those that you already have in the garden is an inexpensive exercise with boundless opportunity. African violets are easily propagated from leaf cuttings. Non-woody plants such as geraniums can be propagated from stem cuttings of new growth. Simply plant the leaves or cuttings into a tray containing propagation mix or peat moss. Once roots appear at the base of the leaf or cutting the plant can be planted out into potting mix in individual pots.

Divide and conquer

Kids love succulents with their fleshy leaves and interesting colours. Succulents can be grown on from a single leaf or from a 'chicken' or new floret which appears at the base of the existing

plant. Individual plants can take pride of place on a bedroom window sill and will thrive with very little watering. Or perhaps the kids could create a piece of living artwork by planting a pattern of different coloured and textured plants in a tray or on a piece of chicken wire padded with peat moss.



Herbs

Create a winter herb garden to sit in the kitchen window. Coriander, parsley and mint are great options. They are fast growing and fragrant. The herbs can then be used as the base for a cooking lesson and the kids can grow, cook and eat their own produce. How about a hearty stew or soup or perhaps even a smoothie or juice?

Get outside

If the weather is fine then pull on the gumboots and get out in the garden proper. An hour in the fresh air is good for everyone. Perhaps do a bit of winter pruning and weeding, rake up the fallen leaves and top up the compost bins, or go on the hunt for pests such as snails and slugs.

Happy gardening with the grandchildren

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