

Kid's Korner

Gardening With Kids

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LEBANON (Lebanon Co.)—If you missed planting your own garden, it isn't too late to do it. You can plant your garden in containers that can be moved indoors when the weather is too cold for growing plants outdoors.

This page is full of ideas that Ginger Pryor, a summer horticultural extension agent, shared with parents recently at a Lebanon County Extension workshop. Unless you are about 12 years old, you will need an adult to help you with the experiments on this page.

According to the Ginger, who taught the workshop, container gardening is a fascinating way for children to watch plants grow.

For container gardening, you need a very large container in which to plant three to six different kinds of plants.

"Choose the same plant personality," Ginger said.

She means choose plants that like the same amount of sun or shade. If you plant a flower that likes full sun with one that likes shade, one of your plants will probably die or at least appear sickly.

If all the plants like full sun, place the container in a spot where the sun shines on it almost all day. If it likes shade, place the container



Ginger Pryor, Lebanon Extension summer horticulture agent, shows how easily container gardening works when plant personalities are observed.

in a shady area or inside the house away from a window.

Try some of the experiments on this page and write and tell me what you did and what you learned

by doing it. Perhaps, you could include a picture of yourself and the project. Send your letters to Kid's Korner, Lou Ann Good, P.O. Box 609, Ephrata, PA 17522.



Beth Bensing of Lebanon is intrigued with using kitchen scraps for gardening. Here, she holds a plant grown from pineapple leaves.

Kitchen Scrap Gardening

SWEET POTATO VINE:

Set the sweet potato in a jar of water, so that only the narrow end sits in the water. Use toothpicks if necessary to support it at the mouth of the jar. Be sure to put the narrow pointed end into the water. Now roots will grow at this end. Now set the jar in a warm dark place. Keep adding water as it is used up. The new roots will grow out first, and in about two days you will see the stems starting. As soon as they start, move the sweet potato into a sunlit window.

In time, the entire potato will be covered with stems and leaves.

CARROTS:

Take the wilted leaves from the top of the carrot. Cut off 2 inches of the carrot at the big end.

Set it in a shallow bowl of water with pebbles or stones around it to hold it in place.

New leaves will grow out of the top.

Try this with a variety of root vegetables such as parsnips, beets, or turnips.

POTATOES:

Put the potato in a jar of water,

so that only the bottom stays wet. Roots will grow out from the lower end, and new stems and leaves will grow from the eyes.

Try cutting off a small piece of potato that contains several buds and plant in soil. Plant about 3 inches deep. Water often.

ONIONS:

Set in a glass of water so that only the bottom is wet.

When the leaves come out of the top and are 3-5 inches long, cut the onion in half. It is interesting to see.

LENTILS:

Soak some lentil overnight.

Line a glass with a paper towel. Wet the paper so that it sticks to the edge of the glass, and keep about an inch of water in the bottom so that the paper will stay constantly moist.

Lay the seeds between the wet paper and the glass around the top. In a few days, you will see roots growing down and green stems starting up.

If interested, plant lentil seeds in soil after they have been soaked in water.

ORANGES, LEMONS & GRAPEFRUIT:

Soak the seeds overnight and then plant in a pot or either sand or soil.

AVOCADOS:

Take the paper-like coat off of the seed. Then set it in a jar of water. Put the wide bottom part down.

Keep it in a dimly lit room until the roots grow and the stem starts to grow out the top. Then put it in the bright light.

After about two months, you can start adding soil to the water a little at a time.

NOTE: This is a very slow starting plant, BE PATIENT!

RADISHES:

Take a jar and line the sides with a paper towel.

Fill the jar with sand to hold the towel in place.

Arrange 10-15 seeds around the edge between the jar and the towel

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Recycling Kitchen Scraps

The benefits of organic matter in your soil is incomparable to any other garden secrets. It keeps soil loose and pliable, provides needed nutrients to growing plants, and improves the soil's ability to store water and allow for air flow. It is estimated that 29% of land-fill trash is comprised of recyclable organic matter.

Teaching our children the importance of organic matter and at the same time the importance of recycling kitchen scraps is an important gardening lesson.

EXPERIMENT # 1

Goal: To show how common kitchen scraps rot and become beneficial organic matter.

Supplies:
2-3 cups of chopped vegetable and fruit scraps
2-3 cups of soil collected from yard or garden
1 plastic bag

Step 1: Mix together in a plastic bag vegetable scraps and soil, mist with water, blow air into bag and seal.

Step 2: Shake bag sporadically.

Step 3: Soil should be ready to use in 3 weeks. Scraps should be rotted and the consistency of soil.

EXPERIMENT # 2

Goal: Teach the importance of organic matter in soil.

Supplies:
4-6 Cups composted kitchen scraps and soil mixture (see experiment # 1)
4-6 Cups basic soil from yard (do not use potting soil)
6 bush bean seeds
2 pots

Step 1: Fill one pot with compost mixture and the other pot

with basic soil.

Step 2: Make a 1 inch deep hole in the center of each pot and place 3 beans in each hold, cover, and keep moist.

Monitor: How many beans sprout in each pot?

Step 3: After sprouting thin to 1 plant per pot.

Monitor: How is each plant after 1 week, 2 weeks, 3 weeks, etc.?

Which plant has greener leaves?

Which plant produces flowers and how many?

Which plant produces beans? When? How large do they grow?

EXPERIMENT # 3

Goal: Show how organic matter in soil improves the soils water retention and/or drainage. If soil is clay O.M. should improve drainage. If basic soil is sand it should decrease drainage and help with water retention.

Supplies:
4-6 cups composted kitchen scraps and soil mixture (see experiment # 1)
4-6 cups basic soil from yard (do not use potting soil)
2 flower pots
2 gallon milk carton cut in 1/2
String or wire
2 pints of water

Step 1: Place compost/soil mixture in pot and fill to 1" from top.

Step 2: Place basic soil in a pot and fill to 1" from top.

Step 3: Punch holes in all 4 sides of milk carton and stretch wire or string across to form an X and secure.

Step 4: Set pots with soil on wire or string and pour 1 pint of water into pots.

Step 5: Note how long it takes the water to begin to drip into the cartons and how much water drips out of each pot.

Step 6: Compare the water retaining capacity of different soils by figuring the amount of water left in the soil after it finishes dripping. Do this by measuring the water in carton and subtracting measured amount from 1 pint.

Step 7: Test the capacity for drainage. After each container has stopped dripping and you have completed step 6 pour 1 pint of water into pot and notice the time it takes to move through the soil into the jar below. Compare the time it takes for a pint of water to collect beneath each jar.

Readers Write

Dear Readers,

I am 10 and in grade 5 when school starts again. I have five brothers and two sisters. Their names and ages are Jonas, 15; Lydia, 14; Mary, 11; Fred, 9; Joseph, 6; Moses, 5; and Crist, 3.

My parents' names are Henry V. and Barbara S. Stoltzfus. My dad's mon's name is Lydia F. Stoltzfus. My mom parent's names are Joseph F. and Sadie Beiler.

We live on a farm. We have about 500 laying hens and some broilers. We have about 14 kittens (that someone gave us) and two cats. We have two dogs named Trixy and Trouble. We have four

mules and two horses. The horses' names are Bess, Mimmy, Ray, and Sam. We also take care of about 200 pigs. We also have a roadside stand. We sell canteloupes, sweet corn, sugar peas, lettuce, zucchini, string beans, cabbage, potatoes, onions, baked goods, peppers, honey, tomatoes, brown eggs, canned foods, and apples.

I go to Valley View School. We walk unless it is raining. We have almost a mile. Next term we have a new teacher. Her name is Catherine Hurst, I'm looking forward to school starting.

Sadie Stoltzfus
Morgantown