

# Kids Korner

## Kids Dig Gardening Event

**LOU ANN GOOD**

**Lancaster Farming Staff**  
**LITITZ (Lancaster Co.)** — Did your mom ever yell at you for walking in your stockings feet outdoors?

Do you think mice are nice, but your mom sets traps for them?

You will be happy to know that there are ways for you to enjoy mice and walking outdoors in your stockings feet without upsetting your mom.

At a gardening workshop held recently for kids at Esbenshade's Garden Center in Lititz, kids discovered all kinds of neat ways to learn about nature.

### Sock Walk

Instead of wearing socks with no holes outdoors, ask your mom to let you pull a large pair of old socks over your shoes and as far up your legs as they will go. Walk through a field of dry grasses and wildflowers.

"You'll be surprised how many seeds have tiny hooks, barbs, anchors, and spikes just so they can hitch a ride," said Toni Albert, who writes children's books about endangered wildlife and plants.

"When you return from your walk, take your socks off and look at the seeds through a magnifying lens," she told the kids attending the session.

Don't try to remove the seeds. Instead, plant your socks.

That sounds like a strange idea. You won't grow more socks, but those plants and seeds will sprout and grow.

First lay both socks on a tray and pour water over them until they are soaked. Find two shallow pans, and partially fill them with sterile potting soil. Plant one sock in each pan by laying it on the soil and covering lightly with half an inch of soil. Place on pan in a light, warm spot, and keep watering it.

Place the other pan in the refrigerator for two weeks. Many seeds are scheduled to rest through the winter and sprout in the spring. The "winterime" in refrigerator will trick the seeds into germinating when you take them out. After two weeks in the refrigerator, place the second pan near the first and keep it watered.

What comes out of the sock that was put in the refrigerator will be entirely different than the plants that grew from the other sock.

You don't need a whole garden to learn about plants.

You can plant a tiny garden in an old tree stump or even an old sneaker.

For those who love bugs, an old tree stump is a great place to find them. To grow plants in a tree stump or old shoe, fill with dirt, then plant seeds or a plant and watch it grow. Remember to water it.

### Backyard Beasts

Jack Hubley, host of an outdoor television show for children, talked about critters found in the backyard that mom and dad don't like.

Draped around Hubley's neck was a corn snake.

Some people don't like snakes, but snakes are great mice eaters. So are hawks and weasels.

There are 21 species of snakes found in Pennsylvania. Only two species found in Lancaster County are poisonous—the copperhead and the rattlesnake.

If you want a pet snake, Hubley recommended a corn snake. He said, "They are pretty, never bite much, are tame, and like mice, not salads."

Of course, if you like mice, you might not want snakes to be eaten.

"Mice are so cute. How could you possibly set a trap for one of these?" Hubley asked as showed some mice to the group gathered around him. "Well," he admitted as far as keeping mice in the house, "mice are nice, but they aren't that nice."

He showed the kids moles and voles, that look similar to mice but hide in the ground.

### Bees and Butterflies

Dean Long, who works at Esbenshades Greenhouse, showed a honey bee hive to the children. Of the many insects found in backyards, Long said that honey bees don't sting unless you step on them. However, wasps and yellow jackets will sting continually.

Another session was on butterflies. "Butterflies make everyone smile. It's nature's way of giggling," the instructor said.

It was a day to learn and have fun. The children were divided into four groups and the leaders wore funny hats.

Each child received a 3½-inch blooming plant to take home and transplant.

"Gardening can be a valuable



Jack Hubley recommends a corn snake as a pet.



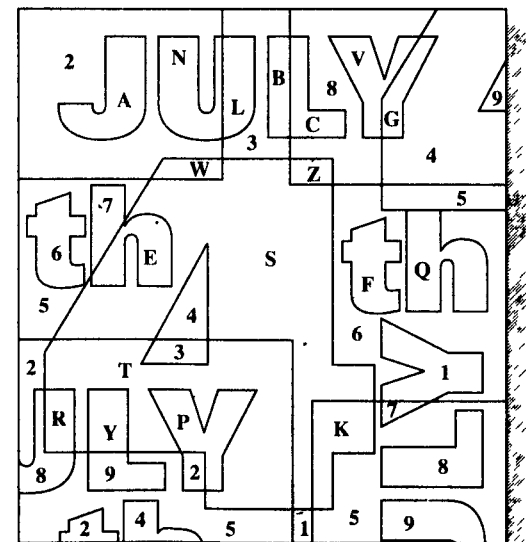
Kids attending the special gardening event at Esbenshade's Gardening Center examine a bee hive.

learning tool if the child is left the responsibility to care for the plants. If you can teach a child something important like this at a young age, it can stay with him or her for the rest of the child's life," said Wilbur Siegrist, retail general manager at Esbenshades.



The children were divided into four groups to learn about critters, endangered plants, butterflies, bees, and gardening.

## HIDDEN PICTURE



Color in each space that contains a letter.