

# Gardening With Kids



You can teach your kids a passion for gardening and respect for Mother Nature by getting them involved in gardening at a young age. The flora and fauna in the garden are fascinating to watch and can be of great educational value to a curious child. Nurture their budding interest by keeping the focus on fun. There are all sorts of amazing and wonderful projects to do at any age, below a few suggestions.

## **Ages 2-3**

- Children this age are curious and like to engage in simple pastimes such as digging a hole and pouring water into it. They are also drawn to small creatures such as bugs, worms and colourful butterflies, and like to collect and touch. Encourage them to potter around your garden, to explore plants and their shapes and sizes, and teach them where plants come from and how they grow from seed to a plant.

## **Ages 4-5**

- For children this age a garden is a place to explore, play, discover and pretend. Kids love to build hide-aways or play in overgrown places, so help them to construct a teepee enclosed with climbing beans or sweet peas. Help your child to sow some seeds in pots choosing large seeded varieties that are easy to handle with little fingers. Sunflowers, Beans, Peas and Nasturtiums are great examples. Keep them busy during rainy days by making a cress egghead planter or drying flowers.

## **Ages 6-7**

- Kids at this age are able to create their own little garden patch to grow annual and perennial flowers and veggies. If you have limited garden space you can make a miniature garden in a bucket. Your child can choose the plants but encourage selections that are easy and fast-growing, such as Radish and Marigold. For some extra fun plant exciting and colourful vegetable varieties such as Rainbow Silver Beet and Purple Carrots. Kids are much more likely to eat veggies they have grown and nurtured themselves. In wet weather get the children building a scarecrow, making personalised plant tags, plantable gift tags or building their own terrarium.

## **Ages 8-10**

- Children at this age can be far more engaged with the garden. Try a project that will be fun and rewarding for the whole family such as planting a 'pizza garden' a veggie patch with your favourite pizza toppings such as Capsicums, Tomatoes, Oregano and Basil. The patch can also be shaped as a pizza with wedge sections for each 'topping'. Kids can help with routine tasks like weeding and fertilising, but do focus on gardening as a fun activity.

## **Ages 11-12 and beyond**

- Children this age want to feel like they are contributing to family life and may wish to cook a gourmet meal using their own veggies and herbs. Gardens are also like "living laboratories" for school assignments on ecology and animal and plant life. Kids who learn to appreciate Mother Nature from an early age will mature into teenagers who are able to respect people, nature and the community. And who knows, they might be budding botanists or landscape designers in the making!