

Getting Kids Fascinated with Gardening

Don Kinzler

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Getting Kids Into Gardening

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~ Don Kinzler, Horticulture Agent/Cass County

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Why it matters...

- Encourages outdoor activity
- Builds responsibility and patience
- Teaches where food comes from
- Boosts creativity and curiosity
- Kids eat more fruits and vegetables if they're part of growing

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Benefits of gardening

- Physical: movement, fresh air
- Mental: reduce stress, improve focus
- Educational: science, math, life skills
- Emotional: Pride in growing something

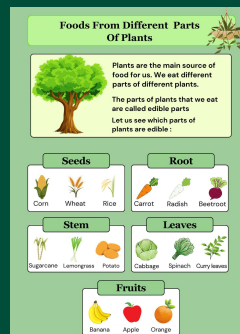


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There's a key ingredient...

- Before we teach them
 - Where food comes from
 - What plant parts we eat
 - The importance of fruits and vegetables
- ✓ These come later – but first...



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Here's how to hook kids in gardening...

- Kids must first experience gardening
- That's what creates the desire to be involved
- Get into the soil, plant, see plants grow, pick something to eat, watch flowers bloom.



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Start small and simple

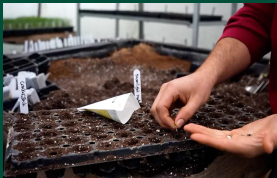
- Start seeds under lights
- Start pots of herbs from seed
- Grow a potato plant from a tuber



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Let kids see quick results



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Place containers in a sunny window, or under lights.



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✓ Seed into a seed tray, and then transplant into individual cell packs or small pots.



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3 focus areas...

- Edibles
- Flowers
- Houseplants



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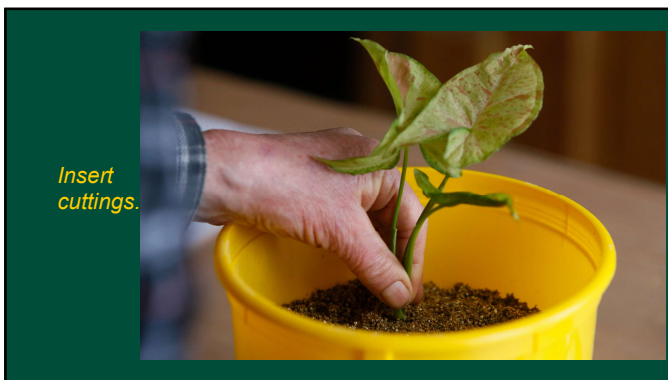
Ice cream bucket method of starting cuttings.



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Rooting requires 2-3 weeks.



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Make it hands-on

- Let kids dig, plant, water
- Encourage messy play
- Assign them their own garden space or plant(s)



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Turn gardening into a game

- Measure plant growth weekly
- Faster growing plant challenge
- Journal the growth

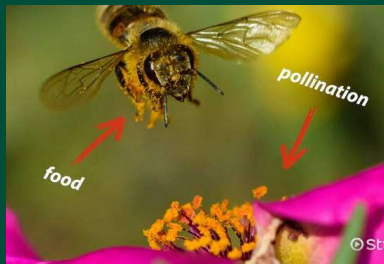


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Incorporate learning

- Teach plant life cycles
- Insects, pollinators
- Simple experiments – sun vs. shade
- Count seeds – check germination percent



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Connect gardening to food

- Make a meal or snack with vegetables you're planting
- Taste-test fresh produce
- Simple recipes – salads, smoothies
- Teach healthy eating habits



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Seasonal ideas

- Spring: plant seeds, make a container garden?
- Fall: collect seeds, different types
- Winter: houseplants



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Gardening builds lifelong skills

- Start small, keep fun
- Let kids explore, lead
- Every child can grow something



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Growing TOGETHER
A Gardening Podcast



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Thank you!

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