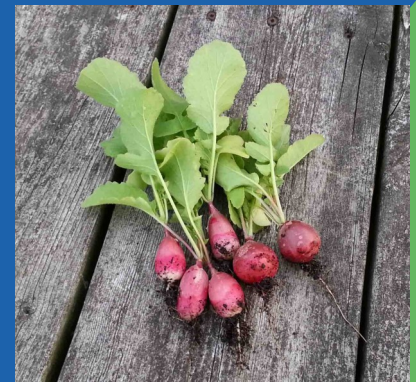




Farm to Table: Exploring Easy to Grow and Harvest Veggies with Kids

Besides having a fun activity to do, growing veggies with kids provides many learning opportunities for them as well. It's a *sensorial activity*. They can explore how dry soil feels and wet soil just after watering their plants. They will discover how different plants smell and taste, along with their different textures when they are eaten. **Gardening with kids also engages *fine motor skills*** and offers them an opportunity to practice patience while caring for their growing plants. Grasping gardening tools, placing tiny seeds in the soil and gripping the handle of the watering can while being gentle with fragile plants support this development. **They will also have opportunities for *math and science* learning.** They will need to measure how far apart to plant seeds. They can compare sizes of harvested vegetables as well as measure and track growth of plants. It will also offer opportunities to learn about what plants need to grow. **Below you will find some easy indoor and outdoor veggies to grow** that will produce a harvest relatively quickly and in small spaces if you don't have a large vegetable patch to use.



What are Microgreens?

Microgreens are a quick and super healthy vegetable to grow. They are the plant that grows and is harvested just beyond seedling stage. The list of microgreens is long. Some kid-friendly suggestions include basil, broccoli, carrot, celery, spinach.

How to grow microgreens indoors

- Use a shallow pot or container that is at least 20" deep, with good drainage.
- Fill the container with sterilized potting soil to ½ inch from the top. Microgreens don't need additional fertility. Most of the energy that they need for growth is inherent in the seed.
- Sprinkle your seeds for microgreens liberally on the soil surface. Microgreens are broadcast densely. Cover loosely with a light layer of additional soil.
- Firm the soil in place.
- Sprinkle the surface of the soil with powdered cinnamon to prevent damping-off disease. You can use older spices for this.
- Water the pot from below, rather than watering with a watering can. Do this by letting it sit in a pan of lukewarm water until the surface of the pot is lightly damp. Then drain the planting container until it doesn't drip any more.
- Place the container on a tray to catch the drips and protect your carpets and furniture.
- Provide adequate light for growth. Without strong light microgreens will grow spindly and leggy. Microgreens can be grown in a sunny window if you live where there is adequate sunlight year round. If you live north of the 40th parallel, you'll need supplemental light in the winter months to grow microgreens.

Source: <https://www.attainable-sustainable.net/microgreens/>

For more information on growing and harvesting Microgreens:

indoorgardennook.com

Lettuces are easier to grow from plant starts than from seeds.

Carrots are a slower to grow veggie but great for deep containers and fun to harvest at different times to uncover their shape and size.

Radishes start sprouting within a couple weeks and ready to harvest within 30 days.

Growing your plants to be harvested in containers creates portable gardens. As children are learning about what plants need to grow, it allows them to make predictions and monitor growth to adjust their growing conditions as they go.

For more Container Gardening projects visit:

thespruce.com

Kidsgardening.org



Farm to Table: Activity and Books

Recipe: Salad Wraps (serves 20 children)

From: www.growing-minds.org

Ingredients

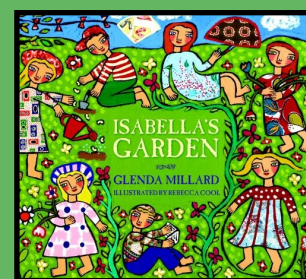
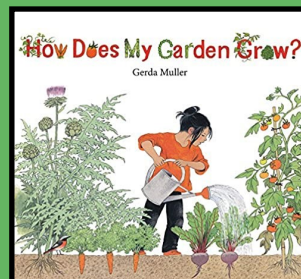
2 heads local green lettuce
1 head broccoli
4 local carrots (grated)
2 cucumbers
1 bunch celery
5 apples
8 oz. cheddar or Monterey jack
cheese (cut into slices)

Directions:

1. Wash the vegetables. Cut them into chunks. Give them to the students.
2. Prompt the children to cut the vegetables into small pieces or slices using plastic knives.
3. Allow the children to choose the vegetables for their wrap.
4. Prompt them to place the cut vegetables and cheese on top of the tortilla. Roll the tortilla around the vegetables like a burrito.

Books to get the kids inspired to garden

While you are waiting for your seeds to grow, read a few books about gardening with your kids. There are so many lovely picture books that helps kids learn about and inspire them to love gardening, here are a few of our favorites.



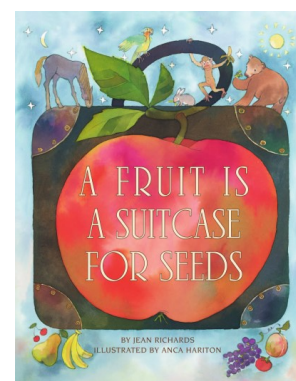
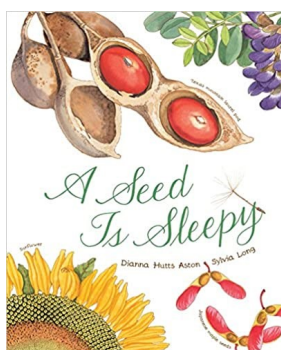
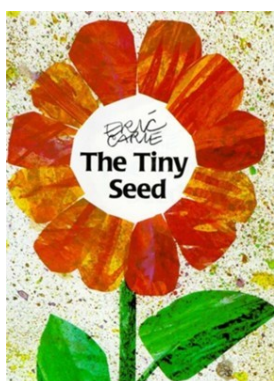
Isabella's Garden by **Glenda Millard** – This book has beautiful illustrations and since we have an Isabella in our family it is one of our favourites.

How Does My Garden Grow by **Gerda Muller** – This is a lovely book with lots of information about plans and gardening included as part of the story.

The Tiny Seed by **Eric Carle** – With the stunning illustrations we all know from Eric Carle, this book tells the story of how a tiny seed survives to grow into a flower.

A Seed is Sleepy by **Dianna Aston and Sylvia Long** – This book is all about the magical life of seeds. Who knew seeds could be so mysterious and beautiful!

A Fruit is a Suitcase for Seeds by **Jean Richards** - Ever wonder why a tomato is actually a fruit? This book explains exactly what a fruit is in simple terms that young children can understand.



A curated list of other children's books about farms and gardens can be found at <https://growing-minds.org/childrens-literature/>