



May 5, 2020

Hello fellow gardeners,

Soon it will be warm outside and it will be time to get our gardens ready for planting. Ms. Ann, who teaches Garden Club in the summer at the Children's Museum of FDL has been planting seeds in cups, recyclable containers and pots at home; and you can do the same! Gardens can take various forms such as one on the ground level, raised beds or container gardens. We are happy to share with you this flower garden starter kit with directions for care and transplanting. You can grow it in any container and each plant will need some care. Included in this kit are a cup, soil, flower seeds, sunglasses and educational materials.



Enrichment/Activities:



Garden Vocabulary Words To Discuss With Your Child As You Plant:

Germination-development of a plant, or a period of time from planting the seed in the soil until you see the seedling **sprout**-coming out of the soil surface. Most vegetables have a 7-10 day germination period. This time can be days or weeks due to the outer covering or protective covering of each seed, which is called the **hull**. The inside parts of the seeds or **embryo** have to break through the hull. Some hulls are softer than others, softer **hulls** means the germination period is usually shorter. The **cotyledon** is the name of the first "leaves" of the plant.

What A Plant Needs To Grow:

Seeds, soil, sunlight, air, water, food (fertilizer), space to grow and optimal temperature

Investigate:

Look at various seeds in your home from foods you eat or seed packages and feel the hull. The seeds from popcorn have a harder hull than tomatoes. Ask: What is the shape of the seed and what do you feel? Is it like the shape of a ball, raindrop or describe the shape? Describe how it feels. Does it feel hard or soft? Rough or smooth?

Plant Parts:

Plants have parts such as the seed, root, stem, leaf, fruit and flower. We typically eat the parts of plants that taste the best. Some seeds we eat are corn and peas. Some flowers we eat are broccoli and cauliflower. Can you think of others in each category? The next time you come to the museum look at the plant parts poster in our garden. Look for those parts on the plants you see in the museum gardens, right now you can investigate outside at home as the spring plants start to emerge from the soil and try to identify parts of the plant.

Related Book: The Garden in Our Yard by: Greg Henry Quinn



Planting Directions And How To Care For Your Plant:

1. Read enrichment activities before planting, ask your child questions as they plant
2. Put newspaper or paper towels down for easy cleanup or use the enclosed small garbage bag. Place the cup on top of the newspaper/paper towels/garbage bag.
3. Empty the **soil** from the bag into the cup. Encourage your child to feel the soil and describe what they feel. Using their finger, your child will poke a few holes, roughly about a half an inch deep into the soil that is in the cup.
4. Open the snack size bag of seeds-feel and look at the **hull**. Place the seeds into the holes. Push the dirt together over the holes so the seeds are covered.
5. Add water to the cup, about 1/3 cup of water so the soil feels wet, you should see the water through the clear cup. If the water is pooling, tip the cup over and drain. Add additional water if the soil feels dry in the days to follow. Insert one finger to feel how wet the lower level of soil is. Add water if the soil feels dry.
6. Count how many days the seed needs for it's **germination** period?
7. Once it **sprouts**, it will need sunlight and water. It has food, or fertilizer included in the soil. What else does it need to grow? As it grows, look to see if you can spot the roots through the clear plastic cup. The roots carry the water to other parts of the plant.
8. Keep the plant indoors until the air temperature outside is at least 60 degrees. It may be a shock to it's system to put the plant directly outside, so put it outside for a couple of hours to begin with and then increase the time.
9. If it outgrows the container, **transplant** it (moving it to a larger container as the root system outgrew the cup).
10. Enjoy watching it grow and bloom and identifying plant parts!

Transplanting Directions:

Sometimes plants outgrow their containers, sort of like when you outgrow your clothes! So we need to transplant them. It is best to do this when the soil feels more dry than moist. Select a larger container than the cup, place soil in it about half full. Push some of the soil to the sides so it looks like a bowl of soil. Cut the side of the cup with a scissors in two places. Carefully lift the plant and soil out of the cup, supporting it with your hand to keep the root system intact. Place it inside the larger container (or in the ground outside). Add soil to the sides so it is even with the existing top level of the soil of the plant. Give it water and all the things a plant needs to grow. Enjoy identifying the plant parts as it grows!

Stay happy & healthy!

Ann Meyers
Director of Museum Experiences