Creating a Container Garden

We all know that “April showers bring May flowers,” but did you know that April is recognized as National Garden Month? As the weather shifts, now is the perfect time to consider how you can create a garden. What a great excuse to get outside and get your hands dirty!

Guide to Container Gardening

Even the smallest area can boast a crop of vegetables or a garden of flowers in containers. Planter boxes, wooden barrels, hanging baskets and large flowerpots are just some of the containers that can be used. Consider the following guidelines when choosing your container:

- Avoid planting in containers with narrow openings.
- Cheap plastic pots deteriorate in UV sunlight and terracotta pots dry out rapidly. Glazed ceramic pots are excellent choices, but require several drainage holes.
- Wooden containers are susceptible to rot. Redwood is relatively rot-resistant and can be used without staining or painting. One advantage of wooden containers is that they can be built to sizes and shapes that suit the location.
- Use containers between 15 and 120 quarts capacity. Small pots restrict the root area and dry out very quickly. The size and number of plants to be grown will determine the size of the container used. Deep rooted vegetables require deep pots.
- Make sure your pot has adequate drainage. Holes should be ½ inch across. Line the base of the pot with newspaper to prevent soil loss.
- Set containers on bricks or blocks to allow free drainage.
- Line hanging baskets with sphagnum moss for water retention. Keep baskets away from afternoon sun.
- If you choose clay pots, remember that clay is porous, and water is lost from the sides of the container. Plants in clay pots should be monitored closely for loss of moisture.
- Since potting mixes drain water rapidly, fertilizer will be washed out of the container as you water. Lighter mixes will require more frequent fertilizing than heavier mixes. It’s a good idea to use a diluted liquid fertilizer with every other watering.
- Check the labels on the products in your garden center to be sure that they contain a complete, balanced solution that includes trace elements.


Source: Kansas City Community Gardens
Celebrate the Week of the Young Child™
April 16 – April 20, 2018

The Week of the Young Child™ is an annual celebration hosted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) celebrating early learning, young children, their teachers and families. Create a fun, educational week for children and families by participating in themed activities each day.

Music Monday: Choose a music and movement activity to explore different sounds of music, movements of your body or simply have a dance party!

Tasty Tuesday: Try a new fruit or vegetable today! Cooking introduces science and math skills for children of all ages. Discover a new, healthy recipe with the children.

Work Together Wednesday: Create a city out of blocks or a fort out of blankets and chairs; visit a park and build fairy houses from sticks and leaves. Use building activities to bolster social skills and support motor development too.

Artsy Thursday: Get your creativity flowing! Plan activities that tap into the children’s creativity and support motor development.

Family Friday: Invite families to share time in your classroom with the children. Stories, special foods and pictures help to bring a family culture to your setting.

Gardening with Children

- **Start Small:** A garden does not have to be large. It can be a raised bed or as simple as a window box filled with herbs.
- **Choose easy to grow seeds:** Generally speaking, the larger the seed, the easier it is to grow. Pick veggies such as peas, beans, corn, squash, peppers, broccoli and tomatoes.
- **Look for plant extremes:** To interest children in gardening, select plants that either grow tall and sprawl, or stay teeny-tiny. Sunflowers are an excellent choice for a children’s garden since they grow to be tall.
- **Be creative with containers and props:** Make it playful and interesting. Plant in rubber boots, coffee can with holes poked in the bottom. Climbing plants such as green beans can climb up a teepee made of bamboo or sticks.
- **Don’t be afraid of a little dirt:** Allow children to get their hands-dirty. It will feel like a special privilege. Use garden tools and allow them to work away!
- **Eat what you have grown:** When you harvest your fruits and veggies, savor the flavor.
- **Foster Responsibility:** Create helpers for watering, weeding and monitoring pests. Children can pick veggies too. Children will begin to take ownership of the garden and take pride in their new responsibility.

Healthy Eats

**Lettuce Wraps**

**Ingredients:**
- 1 Head of Romaine Lettuce
- 1 Tomato
- 1 pkg. Sliced Turkey
- 1 Bottle Ranch Dressing
- 1 pkg. Sliced Cheese
- 1 Avocado

**Directions:**
1. Wash lettuce and pat dry.
2. Place 1 turkey slice on lettuce.
3. Add 1 slice of cheese.
4. Slice avocado and add to wrap.
5. Dice tomato and add to wrap.
6. Roll lettuce and dip in ranch dressing to taste.

*Source: Homemade by Jaci blog. Link not available.*