



GROW YOUR OWN FOOD

KIDS IN THE GARDEN

Introducing children to the world of gardening is a great way to get them outdoors. It is also an excellent way to get them learning about gardens.

HOW SHOULD WE GET STARTED?

One of the best places to start is with a packet of seeds or a punnet of vegetables. Choose something with a large seed or with a short time frame from planting to picking.

Vegies

Squash seeds are a great choice because the seed is large and they are almost guaranteed to germinate and grow quickly. Kids will love seeing the first vegetables appear. Try leaving a couple of these vegetable to keep growing and, who knows, you may have a candidate for Ballarat's largest squash!

Flowers

The best flower for kids is the sunflower. Plant some in a line or circle (just watch out for snails when the plants are young).

Punnets

Pick something like carrots or lettuce as these grow easily and quickly (remember – carrots prefer a sandier soil).

HOW CAN WE MAKE IT MORE FUN?

When you are planting, get the kids to make their own plant tags. You can use things like ice cream sticks, ice

cream containers cut into strips or craftwood – just use your imagination for some fun results.

Why not put together a strawberry pot? Kids will love picking fresh strawberries they planted themselves. Or give the kids a terracotta pot each and let them choose a succulent to plant in it. You can then let them keep it in their room on a window sill or in a well-lit spot.

WHAT ARE SOME MORE ADVENTUROUS IDEAS?

Scarecrow

How about making a scarecrow using old clothes you have around the house? They make a great talking point and are a great addition, especially in a veggie patch.

Colourful totem pole

How about your own piece of art as a feature? Buy a suitable timber pole and let the kids paint it in bright colours. You can secure the post by cementing or tamping it in the ground. Hey presto! ... your very own unique design element and it will look great among the garden beds.



TICKNER'S TIP

Michael Tickner, Adv Cert Hort (read Michael's profile at www.chw.net.au)

"Spray the home-made plant tags with an aerosol lacquer to protect them from the weather."

If you have any questions about kids and gardening, ask your nursery professional for advice.

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