

April 2017

MUCH TO DO ABOUT GARDENING WITH YOUTH

Dig, Plant and Grow these youth gardening resources – books, internet websites, models for youth gardens, crafts and grants. OH MY!

Children Learn by Doing and Teaching their skills:

- ❖ Entrance to a housing addition or small park
- ❖ Elder neighbor who needs help with garden
- ❖ Grandparent who needs help with garden
- ❖ Adults coach the children to research the site: soil, sun, water source, cleanup, amending and tilling soil, garden design, then plant and seed types. Next design the garden and note plant/seed placement plus a path for weeding, tilling, staking and harvest.
- ❖ Sometimes local big box stores and garden centers will donate seeds, plants, soil and tools especially if children give a presentation to the manager.
- ❖ Although Spring arrived, it is too early for some areas to plant seeds or plants. So allow children to use gardening magazines and books to plan the gardens in the ground or in containers.
- ❖ Perhaps begin with small gardens or repurposed containers in a mini-ecosystem that is less overwhelming.
- ❖ Ensure drainage holes are drilled in containers. Gather wooden boxes, pots, old wheelbarrow, boot, and colander. Then gather materials for children: soil, trowel, gloves, seeds and plants. Allow them to design the space with coaching. Try teaching them to mix veggies, flowers and herbs in containers to attract beneficial bugs.
- ❖ Ideas for container gardens:
- ❖ Tomato in middle, carrot seeds around it, Oriental basil and lemon thyme in front with trailing annual flower in very front.
- ❖ 'Patio Choice' yellow cherry tomato in middle, carrot seeds around it, dwarf lavender, thyme and rosemary in front with trailing annual flower at very front.

Craft for Children's busy hands:

You can order seed tapes from catalogs or buy them at nurseries. Show the children how to place the seeds on tapes and keep each type separate with a note for planting. If you like, there is a recipe for making seed tapes with flour, water and toilet paper on page 145 of "Roots, Shoots, Buckets and Boots."

Great gardening books for children:

- ❖ "Airplanes in the Garden – Monarch Butterflies Take Flight," by Joan Z. Calder, Patio Publishing, 2011.
- ❖ "Sip, Pick and Pack... -How Pollinators Help Plants Make Seeds," by Polly W. Cheney.
- ❖ See 25 books celebrating Springtime and Gardening at "amightygirl" website includes "Miss Rumphius," "The Gardener" and more. <http://www.amightygirl.com/blog?p11501>
- ❖ "A Child's Garden: 60 Ideas to Make any Garden Come Alive for Children," by Molly Dannenmaier, 2008.
- ❖ "Attracting Beneficial Bugs To Your Garden," by Jessica Wallister, Timber Press, 2014. Explore these Native Plant resources to teach children about Native Plants:
- ❖ Audubon Native Plants Database at www.audubon.org/native-plants
- ❖ Ecoregional Planting Guides for Pollinators, <http://pollinator.org/guides>

Until next thyme, enjoy coaching and guiding youth in the garden.

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