



# Seasonal Food & Gardening for the Early Years

BOOK  
**1**

STEPHANIE KITCHEN  ALEXANDER GARDEN  
FOUNDATION.  
*Growing Harvesting Preparing Sharing*



## SAMPLE ONLY

To purchase full resource, visit:  
[kitchengardenfoundation.org.au](http://kitchengardenfoundation.org.au)



A background image showing several children in a kitchen setting. One child is grating something, another is pouring liquid from a measuring cup, and others are looking at the camera or their work. The image has a teal/cyan tint.

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction: Pleasurable Food Education and the Early Years</b>	p 4
How to Use This Book	p 9
Activities and the Early Years Learning Framework	p 10
Getting Started: Cooking Spaces	p 12
Seasonal Produce Combinations	p 16
Substituting Ingredients	p 17
Getting Started: Growing Spaces	p 18
Seasonal Planting Lists by Climate Zone	p 19
Picture Books on Kitchen Garden Themes	p 21
<b>Basics</b>	p 23
<b>Growing</b>	p 35
<b>Senses</b>	p 47
<b>Living creatures</b>	p 59
<b>Water</b>	p 69
<b>Australian gardens</b>	p 81
<b>Seasons and celebrations</b>	p 91
<b>Templates</b>	p 103
<b>Index</b>	p 105

**SAMPLE ONLY**

To purchase full resource, visit:  
[kitchengardenfoundation.org.au](http://kitchengardenfoundation.org.au)

## INTRODUCTION

# Pleasurable Food Education and the Early Years

This book is more than just a collection of hands-on activities that young children can enjoy. It is a practical guide to teaching children about food: where food comes from, how humans make and share food, and what fresh, seasonal dishes taste like.

The activities, recipes and advice in this book stem from many years of experience teaching children of all ages to appreciate fresh food, grow their own vegetables, herbs and fruit, and establish positive food relationships that will serve them well for life.

Pleasurable food education is fun. It's hands-on, and it teaches each child useful skills, such as whisking and beating mixtures; planting and harvesting leafy greens; rolling out dough and the fine motor skill of folding little pastries and parcels; transplanting seedlings and ensuring their success and productivity in the vegetable garden.

Activities have been written with the intention that children will do as much of the active work as possible, with adult support. This means that children plant tomatoes, they plant and pick the lettuce leaves for salad, they whisk the oil and lemon juice to make a dressing and create a beautiful setting to enjoy them in. If we don't meet some of our expectations, that's okay – we are all learners and we are encouraging children's active participation in their own food future.

This book is organised into themes, making it easier to extend existing activities and add in some of these group, individual or 'station' ideas to your existing repertoire. Because there are so many picture books about gardens, farms, food and cooking, we have listed just a few favourites at the start of every chapter, and there is a complete list of these books (plus a few extras) on page 21.

For more practical advice on how to use this book, see page 9. For information on the ways each activity links to the Early Years Learning Framework, see page 10.

The Stephanie Alexander  
grow (even in a small ga  
next page) explains the  
and tastes.

ne can  
(on the  
ew smells

# SAMPLE ONLY

To purchase full resource, visit:  
[kitchengardenfoundation.org.au](http://kitchengardenfoundation.org.au)



This experience with fresh food can help a child develop positive food habits for life. Growing herbs, fruit and vegetables to create these experiences gives children the opportunity to explore the world around them, and become confident in learning new skills.

This book aims to support educators working within the context of the Australian Government's Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), which has the aim of supporting children to become successful and confident learners, and individuals who can be active participants in their community. This book also aims to support early childhood settings achieve the Quality Areas of the National Quality Standard.

## The Pleasurable Food Education Philosophy

The purpose of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation is to introduce pleasurable food education to children during their learning years, in order to form positive food habits for life.

Pleasurable food education emphasises the flavours as well as the health benefits of fresh, seasonal, delicious food.

Dishes cooked reflect the vegetables, herbs and fruits grown, season-by-season, by the children in their organic gardens, and also reflect the Australian Dietary Guidelines.

Kitchen educators emphasise balance and moderation, and endorse the concept of preparing fruit-based desserts 'sometimes-only'.

Pleasurable food education is designed to be fully integrated into the curriculum or learning framework as it offers infinite possibilities to reinforce literacy, numeracy, science, cultural studies and all aspects of environmental sustainability.

In addition, pleasurable food education delivers observable social benefits to all children, including those with special needs.

Pleasurable food education encourages critical thinking, teamwork, an understanding of cause and effect, and increased levels of observation.



## Recipe guidelines

- > The preferred cooking fat is Australian-grown extra virgin olive oil in most recipes. Where butter is used in recipes, we recommend 100 per cent butter, not compound spreads or margarine. The aim is to have no more than 15 grams of butter per person in any recipe, preferably less.
- > The recipes encourage the use of low-fat styles of cheese e.g. ricotta or feta. If cheese is used in a sauce we recommend no more than 25 grams per serve.
- > Where milk is used in recipes we recommend fat-reduced milk or standard milk, giving the Kitchen Educator or home cook the option.
- > Whenever fr
- > Fruit-based using the mi

**SAMPLE ONLY**

To purchase full resource, visit:  
[kitchengardenfoundation.org.au](http://kitchengardenfoundation.org.au)

er.  
red



# Basics

This chapter will introduce children to the kitchen and the garden spaces, a few key skills (such as planting) and some key recipes that will become familiar over time.

You don't have to wait until you have everything ready. Get the children to help plan the garden. All you need is some garden bed space or pots.

Talk about what the children like to eat, what they have seen growing elsewhere, and the fruit and vegetables their family buys or grows. Read some of the following food- and garden-themed books.

## Activities

- Introduction to the Kitchen Space
- Washing Your Hands
- Setting the Table
- Introduction to the Garden Space
- Sow Seeds in the Garden
- Sprouting heads

To decide what to plant, check the month-by-month planting lists on pages 19–20.

## Recipes

- Leafy Salad
- Basic Pasta Dough
- Tomato & Garlic Sauce
- Stephanie's Simple Pasta Sauces
- Wheat Tortillas

## PICTURE BOOKS AND STORIES

- Albert, Mary & Lofts, Pamela 2011, *How the Birds got their Colours – An Aboriginal Story*, Scholastic, Sydney. Themes: Indigenous legends, birds, helping friends.
- Carle, Eric 1987, *The Tiny Seed*, Simon & Schuster, New York. Themes: seeds, growth.
- Child, Lauren 2003, *I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato*, Candlewick Press, Somerville. Themes: trying new foods, fun.
- Donaldson, Julia & Monks, Lydia (illustrator) 2009, *What the Ladybird Heard*, Pan Macmillan, London. Themes: farmyard animals, sounds.

# SAMPLE ONLY

To purchase full resource, visit:  
[kitchengardenfoundation.org.au](http://kitchengardenfoundation.org.au)

# Introduction to the Kitchen Space

## EYLF Outcomes

**Outcome 1:** Children have a strong sense of identity

**Outcome 2:** Children are connected with and contribute to their world

**Outcome 4:** Children are confident and involved learners



This first session introduces children to the kitchen space. If you will be cooking at a table you have set up in your regular learning area, rather than a dedicated space, explain that while the food is being prepared, this table is the 'kitchen'. Children will also be exploring equipment such as mortars and pestles and rolling pins.

## INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- > What does your family like to cook at home?
- > Do you help cook at home?
- > What do you like to eat?
- > What do you like to eat when you go out?



## RESOURCES

- aprons
- kitchen equipment, including bowls, spoons, colanders, a mortar and pestle (big ones are steadiest), rolling pins and (if you have one) a pasta machine
- sprig of fresh herbs in season such rosemary, oregano, thyme, basil sage, mint, coriander
- a few cups of plain flour and rice

## ACTIVITY

- Explain the rules for safety in the kitchen, such as walking slowly and clearing up any wet spills on the floor immediately.
- Handle the equipment: use a colander to shake some rice into a bowl, or a sieve to sift some flour.
- Sniff and crush the herbs. You can also use the mortar and pestle for this.



**SAMPLE ONLY**

To purchase full resource, visit:  
[kitchengardenfoundation.org.au](http://kitchengardenfoundation.org.au)



# Washing Your Hands

## EYLF Outcomes

**Outcome 3:** Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

**Outcome 4:** Children are confident and involved learners



Washing hands is a basic skill for any cook, no matter what their age. A song helps young children to wash for long enough for their hands to be clean.

In the kitchen children should wash their hands:

- before cooking
- after going to the toilet
- after sneezing, coughing, blowing their nose or touching their mouth
- after touching dirty areas such as the floor
- after gardening.

## INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- > When do you wash your hands at home?
- > Why do you wash your hands?



## RESOURCES

- sink with warm water
- soap
- paper towels or tea towels

## ACTIVITY



- Run the water until it is warm, not too hot.
- Take turns to try the water – is it warm enough?
- Put soap all over your hands – front, back and all the fingers.
- Rub your fingers together under the warm water.
- Sing a song while you do it: a single verse of 'Happy Birthday' or 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star' is about the right length of time.
- Dry your hands on a paper towel and put the towel in the bin.
- Discuss when you need to wash your hands again.

# SAMPLE ONLY

To purchase full resource, visit:  
[kitchengardenfoundation.org.au](http://kitchengardenfoundation.org.au)

## Basil Pesto

**Season:** Summer/Autumn

**Serves:** 30 tastes or 4 serves at home

**Fresh from the garden:** basil, garlic

Aromatic, emerald pesto is a great stand-by for a fresh pasta sauce or on pizzas. If you are not serving your pesto immediately, keep it in sterile glass jars. A layer of olive oil on the top of the pesto will help to keep it fresh. Alternatively, pesto keeps well in the freezer.

### EQUIPMENT

metric measuring scales and cups  
grater, coarse or fine  
frying pan  
food processor  
spatula  
serving bowl

### INGREDIENTS

½ cup pine nuts (or substitute pepitas or sunflower seeds  
or half a 400 g can of chickpeas, rinsed and drained)  
4 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped  
2 large handfuls of basil (about 2 cups well-packed leaves)  
120 g parmesan, grated  
¾ cup olive oil  
salt, to taste

### WHAT TO DO

- Prepare all of the ingredients based on the instructions in the ingredients list.
  - Dry-fry the pine nuts (or substitute as suggested in the ingredients list) in the frying pan over a medium heat until golden.
- Add the garlic to the mortar and pestle along with the toasted pine nuts.
  - Take turns at grinding the mix until it is a rough paste.
  - Pluck the basil leaves and discard the stems. Rip them into smaller pieces and grind in the mortar and pestle.
  - Add the parmesan and olive oil.
  - Taste for salt and season if necessary.
  - Using the spatula, scrape the pesto into the serving bowl.

Pesto goes beautifully with:

Wheat Tortillas, page 34

Basic Pasta Dough, page 31



# SAMPLE ONLY

To purchase full resource, visit:  
[kitchengardenfoundation.org.au](http://kitchengardenfoundation.org.au)