



Seasonal Food & Gardening for the Early Years

BOOK
3

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Growing Harvesting Preparing Sharing





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Activities and the Early Years Learning Framework

Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

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

Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

Source: Australian Government Department of Education and Training, www.education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework-0

This book has been written to support educators working with the practices and principles of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). The following table will help you plan your kitchen and garden activities according to the EYLF Learning Outcomes. Most activities also include inquiry questions for educators to use as a starting point with children.

ACTIVITY

	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4	Outcome 5
Aphid and Caterpillar Spray, p 85		X		X	
Attracting Pollinators, p 90		X		X	
Beeswax Food Wraps, p 91		X		X	
Beneficial Ladybirds, p 38		X		X	
Build a Worm Café, p 71		X		X	
Edible-Flower Seed Spheres, p 97		X		X	
Gardener's Hand-Cream, p 98			X	X	
Ground Eggshells for the Garden, p 35		X		X	
Grow a Living Cubby-House, p 101		X	X	X	
Gumboot Strawberry Planters, p 69		X	X	X	
Herb Garden Tower, p 27		X	X		
Little Lettuce Leaves, p 24		X	X		
Make a Barometer, p 51		X		X	X
Make a Birdbath, p 83		X		X	
Make a Bird Scarer, p 74		X		X	
Make a Mini Greenhouse, p 28		X	X	X	
Make a Windsock, p 50		X		X	X

	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4	Outcome 5
Make Windchimes, p 57		X		X	
Milk Bottle Harvest Baskets, p 67		X		X	
Organise a Produce Swap, p 73	X	X			X
Organise a Working Bee, p 93	X	X			X
Plant Decoys, p 43		X		X	X
Planting Basil and Tomato, p 44		X		X	X
Protecting the Garden from Wind, p 53		X		X	X
Recycled Plant Labels, p 66				X	X
Seed Shaker, p 33		X	X		
Seed Spinner, p 61		X		X	
Testing Soil for Planting Blueberries, p 29		X	X	X	
The Garden Shop, p 76	X	X	X		
The Three Sisters, p 39		X		X	X
Tin Can Vases, p 77	X		X		
Watering Song, p 81		X	X		X
Will the Wind Blow it?, p 59		X		X	X



Little Lettuce Leaves

EYLF Outcomes

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

Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Key Words

flavour, garden, gardener, grow, ingredient, lettuce, plant, salad greens



Lettuce, and other salad greens, are essential ingredients in any kitchen garden. Quick and easy to grow, they are ideal for beginner gardeners. As well, they can be grown year-round in garden beds or containers. Lettuces tend to be of the cut-and-come-again variety where you can cut leaves as needed, and new leaves will continue sprouting, or hearting varieties which can be harvested whole. Children will enjoy exploring the different textures, colours and flavours of the many lettuce varieties available.



RESOURCES

- gardening gloves
- trowels
- containers or large pots
- potting mix
- lettuce seeds
- watering can



WHAT TO DO

- Fill a container or a pot with potting mix.
- Because lettuce seeds are small, they don't need to be sown deeply. Sow a few seeds together around 3 mm deep, and cover lightly with some soil. Check the seed packet to see how far apart the seeds should be planted.
- Water gently. Keep the soil moist by watering regularly at soil level.
- To ensure you have an ongoing harvest of lettuce leaves, make successive sowings every few weeks.
- When it comes time to harvest, whole established lettuces can be cut at the base, or the outer leaves can be snipped with scissors or picked off carefully near the base. Picking the outer leaves often will encourage more growth.

VARIATION: If planting seeds directly into garden beds, prepare the soil by digging it over and adding some compost and organic fertiliser.

EXTENSION: Children can use a magnifying glass, or their eagle eyes, to search lettuces for caterpillars, snails and slugs.

Herb Salad

Season: Winter/Spring

Makes: 30 tastes or 6 serves at home

Fresh from the garden: dill, mint, mixed salad leaves, parsley

This herb salad is a great way for young ones to learn about, touch and smell different herbs.

EQUIPMENT

metric measuring cups
clean tea towels
salad spinner
large bowl
tongs
serving platter

INGREDIENTS

2 cups parsley leaves, torn
1 cup dill fronds, torn
1/3 cup mint leaves, torn
6 cups mixed salad leaves
Honey Mustard Dressing (see page 100)
Toasted Seed Sprinkle (see page 36)

WHAT TO DO

- Prepare all the ingredients based on the instructions in the ingredients list.
- Tip all the salad and herb leaves into the large bowl.
- Dress with the **Honey Mustard Dressing**.
- Gently turn the leaves with the tongs, to coat them evenly in the dressing.
- Serve the salad scattered over with some **Toasted Seed Sprinkle**.



Watering Song

EYLF Outcomes

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

Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

Key Words

caring, deep, music, roots, sing, soil, song, surface, watering



TIP: For inspiration, read garden-themed poems and rhymes together, such as Beatrix Potter's 'We have a Little Garden'.

EXTENSION: Draw pictures to illustrate your song, or consider adding instruments, hand gestures or a dance to accompany the lyrics.

LATER: Water soil that has been mulched and soil that is bare, and compare how long it takes them to dry out. Which soil stays moist for longer?

Children can be quite enthusiastic when watering the garden and caring for their plants, but they need to remember to take their time to ensure the roots of the plants get enough water. In this activity, children compose their own short watering song to help them time the watering and make sure the plants are watered deeply enough. Some even say that music has a positive effect on plant growth!

INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- > Why do plants need water to grow?
- > How much water do plants need to grow?
- > Do all plants need the same amount of water?
- > Why do you think some plants need less water, and some more?



RESOURCES

- paper
- pencil
- hose or watering can



WHAT TO DO

- Sing a favourite song with the children and write down the lyrics. Explore musical concepts such as volume, tempo, pitch, beat, melody and rhythm. This will be the melody to which you will sing your song when it is finished.
- To start composing the lyrics, go outside and water the garden with the children. Ask children to observe their environment, describe their actions and feelings, and predict what will happen to the plants once they're watered.
- Record these observations, which will be used in the song lyrics.
- Encourage children to think of rhyming words that can be incorporated into the song. For example, if a line from the song is 'Slowly tip the watering can', then ask children to think of a word that rhymes with 'can' to use in the next line of the song.
- Once you have finished composing your watering song, go outside and sing it to the plants as you water!

Quick Pickles

Season: All

Makes: 1 x 500 ml jar of pickles

Fresh from the garden: seasonal vegetables and herbs (see suggestions below)

Note: You can experiment with different types of vinegars, herbs and spices to create flavour combinations that go with your seasonal produce.

Suggestions by season:

- **Summer/Autumn:** Beans, capsicum, cherry tomatoes and cucumbers combined with herbs and spices like bay leaves, chillies, dill and garlic.
- **Winter/Spring:** Beetroot, carrots, cauliflower, daikon and radishes combined with herbs and spices like cumin seeds, fennel seeds, mustard seeds and thyme.

EQUIPMENT

metric measuring cups and spoons
clean tea towel
chopping board
cook's knife
heatproof jug
mixing spoon
1 x 500 ml sterilised jar with lid*

INGREDIENTS

1 cup white wine vinegar
1 cup hot water
1 tsp salt
¼ cup castor sugar
2 cups sliced seasonal vegetables
spices and seasonal herbs, to taste

WHAT TO DO

- Prepare all the ingredients based on the instructions in the ingredients list.
- In a heatproof jug, mix together the white wine vinegar, hot water, salt and sugar until the sugar and salt dissolve.
- Put the sliced vegetables into the jar, slipping in any herbs and spices at this point. Leave a 1 cm space at the top of the jar.
- Pour the hot pickling liquid into the jar carefully, filling it to within 1 cm of the top. Make sure all the vegetables are submerged.
- Cool on the bench for an hour to let the vegetables pickle. These quick pickles are now ready to eat or can be stored in the fridge for up to 2 weeks.

*To sterilise jars and lids, wash them in hot soapy water, then rinse them in hot water. Place in a stockpot of boiling water for at least 10 minutes. Drain jars upside down on a clean tea towel and dry them thoroughly in a 150°C oven. Remove the jars from the oven and fill while still hot.

