Creating a Children’s Garden: Growing Gardeners
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Why create a garden for children?
- “American teenagers (13- to 18-year-olds) average about nine hours (8:56) of entertainment media use . . . Tweens (8- to 12-year-olds) use an average of about six hours’ (5:55).” – The Common Sense Census: Media Use by Tweens and Teens
- “Nature deficit disorder” Richard Louv’s Last Child in the Woods, 2005
- Various studies support need for children to be outside and interacting with nature

Let your garden be a place for having fun, observing, working, sharing, inspiration, imagination, connecting with nature.

Plan your garden:
- **Plants** – Choose plants for child-appeal (shapes, colors, textures, scents, taste, plants names, etc.); plants that support pollinators, birds, and wildlife; garden themes as a basis for plant selection; avoid poisonous plants
- **Water** – Add a water feature, simple works; keep it safe
- **Structures and Pathways** – scale to children; be creative; paths and structures engage children
- **Decorations** – include art especially child-created; whimsical garden design and elements; things kids move/that make sound

Good gardening practices
- Right plant, right place – follow plant sun/shade and soil pH, moist/dry recommendations
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM) – select pest-resistant plants, use least harmful method to control pests
- Safety: Use care but don’t scare

Visit children’s gardens
- **Children’s Garden at American Horticultural Society**, River Farm, 7931 E Boulevard Dr, Alexandria, VA [http://www.ahs.org/about-river-farm](http://www.ahs.org/about-river-farm)
- **Children’s Garden at Brookside Gardens**, 1800 Glenallan Ave, Silver Spring, MD; also Brookside Nature Center [www.montgomeryparks.org](http://www.montgomeryparks.org)
- **Children’s Garden in the U.S. Botanic Garden**, 100 Maryland Ave SW, Washington, DC [https://www.usbg.gov/](https://www.usbg.gov/)
- **The Enchanted Woods at Winterthur**, 5105 Kennett Pike, Wilmington, DE [http://www.winterthur.org](http://www.winterthur.org)
• **Indoor Children’s Garden at Longwood Gardens**, 1001 Longwood Road, Kennett Square, PA  
  [http://longwoodgardens.org](http://longwoodgardens.org)

• **Master Gardener Demonstration Gardens’ Children’s Garden**, Agricultural Farm History Park, 18400 Muncaster Rd, Derwood, MD  
  [https://www.extension.umd.edu/mg/locations/demonstration-gardens](https://www.extension.umd.edu/mg/locations/demonstration-gardens)

Visit other gardens

• **Adkins Aboretum**, 12610 Eveland Rd, Ridgely, MD  
  [www.adkinsarboretum.org](http://www.adkinsarboretum.org)

• **Children’s Garden at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden**, 1800 Lakeside Ave, Richmond, VA  
  [http://www.lewisginter.org](http://www.lewisginter.org)

• **Meadowlark Botanical Gardens**, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Ct, Vienna, VA  
  [https://www.nvrpa.org/park/meadowlark_botanical_gardens](https://www.nvrpa.org/park/meadowlark_botanical_gardens)

• **Surreybrooke Gardens and Nursery**, 8537 Hollow Rd, Middletown, MD  
  [http://www.surreybrooke.com/](http://www.surreybrooke.com/)

• **U.S. National Arboretum**, 3501 New York Ave NE, Washington, DC  

• **Woodend Nature Sanctuary**, 8940 Jones Mill Rd, Chevy Chase, MD  

Visit gardens online

• **Michigan 4-H Children’s Garden**, Lansing, MI  

• **Brooklyn Botanic Garden Children’s Garden**  
  [http://www.bbg.org/discover/gardens/childrens_garden](http://www.bbg.org/discover/gardens/childrens_garden)

• **Norfolk Botanical Garden World of Wonders Children’s Adventure Garden**  

Picture Books


Gardening Books


Research online

• Home and Garden Information Center (HGIC)  
  [https://extension.umd.edu/hgic](https://extension.umd.edu/hgic)

• Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center  
  [https://www.wildflower.org/](https://www.wildflower.org/)

• National Gardening Association Kid’s Gardening  
  [www.kidsgardening.org](http://www.kidsgardening.org)

Garden activities


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Additional Resource List by Pam Hosimer

Websites to Encourage Garden Learning

1. **ARKive**
   http://www.arkive.org
   Play a game (Example: click FUN, click GAMES, scroll down to Team WILD, click PLAY NOW, follow the instructions)
   OR watch a carnivorous plant eating an insect video (Example: click SPECIES, click SPECIES GROUP, click PLANTS AND ALGAE, scroll down to VENUS FLYTRAP, click on ALL 1 VIDEO, click on PLAY)

2. **Cornell Lab of Ornithology:**
   http://www.birds.cornell.edu
   This site provides extensive bird resources and information
   eBird: Intuitive site that is simple and fun to use. Create an account, mark your favorite bird watching spot on a map and input information about the birds you’ve observed.
   http://ebird.org/content/ebird

3. **Creating a Pollinator Garden**
   http://www.kidsgardening.org/classroom-projects/creating-pollinator-garden
   Step by step on how to create a garden enjoyed by all

4. **Dawn Publishing**
   http://www.dawnpub.com
   3D Pop-up Apps and free downloadable activities that add amazing sounds and activities to their books (Example - click ACTIVITIES, scroll down to NOISY BUG SING-ALONG)
   http://www.dawnpub.com/activities/bug

5. **Explore Live-cams**
   http://explore.org/#!/live-cams/player
   Whatever the live-cam is watching...

6. **Kids.gov**
   http://www.kids.gov
   Up to date information produced by government programs on almost any topic you can think of.

7. **NeoK12**
   http://www.neok12.com
   Time-lapse video of bush beans growing over a 24 hour period
   http://www.neok12.com/video/Plants/zX6515707a0f466267725159.htm

8. **The Popcorn Board**
   http://www.popcorn.org/
   Encyclopedia Popcornica’s “Popcorn in slow motion” video
   http://www.popcorn.org/AboutUs/Media/PopVideos/tabid/114/Default.aspx

9. **U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council** (available in English and Spanish)
   http://www.blueberrycouncil.org
   Blueberry salt recipe.
   http://www.blueberrycouncil.org/blueberry-recipe/blueberry-salt
   Awesome video of the narrator riding in the blueberry picker!
   http://www.blueberrycouncil.org/growing-blueberries/how-blueberries-grow/

10. **Video Narrated by a Monarch Butterfly**
    http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ry4hqn0W60
    The life cycle of a Monarch butterfly as told from the perspective of the butterfly. Appropriate for students in early elementary school.
10 Inspiring Books to Read with Children in the Garden


10 Practical Books to Create a Magical Experience in the Garden