

ORGANIC GARDENING PROJECTS FOR KIDS



Organic Gardening Projects for Kids



Our lives as we know them on this planet are in danger! Grown-ups around the world have made some big mistakes and now things are going badly wrong.

There is too much pollution.

Too many trees have been chopped down.

The planet is heating up.

We are not looking after the plants and the animals well enough.

There is rubbish everywhere!

Some people have too much. Other people have too little.

Organic gardening offers kids the chance to be real-life super heroes! By getting involved with organic gardening, and growing food the right way, we can all play our part in putting things right.

What is Organic Gardening?

In order to be the super heroes who help put things right, we all have to follow a few, basic rules:

- We do what we can to care for our planet, including all its plants and animals.
- We do what we can to make sure all the people get a fair share, and that we are kind and helpful to each other.
- We do not waste what we have, and return any extra to nature's systems.

Those rules help us make sure that we are doing good, and making our planet a better place. Organic gardening is one way of following these rules.

Organic gardening is just gardening in a natural way, without harmful chemicals. In an organic garden, we work with nature, rather than getting in nature's way.

What is So Great about Organic Gardening?

Organic gardening is great for the plants and animals. By growing food in an organic garden, we ourselves and the people we know can live healthy and happy lives. Gardening with our family or friends can be helpful and fun. In an organic garden, we can also use things that we might otherwise have thrown away to grow more food, which is good for the planet and helps to reduce rubbish.



What We Can Learn in an Organic Garden

There are lots of fun things that we can learn in an organic garden. For example, we can learn:

- How to grow plants from seed.
- How to plant trees and other plants.
- How plants take the food they need to grow from the air and the soil, how they take up water and how they use sunlight to grow.
- How the weather and natural cycles affect the things that grow.
- About the amazing creatures that live in the soil, and how they play their part in growing the food we eat.

- About the other wonderful wildlife we find in our gardens.
- How to keep the soil, plants and wildlife safe from harm.
- What the food we eat looks like when it grows from the ground.
- How to know when fruits and vegetables are ready to pick, and when to pick them.
- That food tastes better when we have grown it ourselves!

Where Can We Get Involved With Organic Gardening?

You might be able to do some organic gardening in your own garden. You might also be able to do some organic gardening at school. Even if you do not have access to outside growing space, you might still be able to grow some food inside on a sunny windowsill at home. Ask your parents, other family members, friends, or teachers whether they can help you with one of these cool organic gardening projects:

Cool Organic Gardening Projects:

Hold a Bioblitz

A bioblitz is a way of working out what plants and animals there are in a garden, or another natural place like a beach, or a woodland, or a park. In a bioblitz, people get together to make a note of all the creatures and plants that are in a certain area during a certain period of time.

You will need:

- A notepad and something to write with.
- Someone to help you identify the things that you find. (You could also look at books, or use the Internet to find out what plants and animals you see are called.)

You may also want:

- Binoculars (to help you see birds and other things that are further away).
- A magnifying glass (to see tiny things more clearly).
- A container of some kind, to catch insects and bugs in so you can see them clearly before you release them back into the wild.
- A camera (so you can take pictures of plants and wildlife to identify them later).



When you hold a bioblitz, you are an investigator and scientist. You can look at clues which can help you work out who and what is visiting a natural spot. When you look closely at your garden, or another natural place, you may well see:

- Plants
- Insects
- Birds
- Fish
- Amphibians (like frogs and toads)
- Reptiles (lizards, snakes)
- Mammals (mice, cats, dogs etc.)

Note down the plants and animals that you see. How many? What types?

Holding a bioblitz is not only interesting, it can also be a useful thing to do. Knowing what plants and animals are in a garden can help us to grow our own food in our gardens more successfully. It can also help us to attract more of creatures that help us to our gardens.



Make a Wildlife Pond & Watch the Wildlife

One cool way to attract helpful creatures to our organic gardens is to make a wildlife pond.

To make a wildlife pond we will need:

- A spade or something else that we can use to dig a hole.
- A pond liner or natural clay to stop the water from escaping.
- Stones, gravel and plants to put in and around the pond.

If it is not going to rain, we may also need water to fill the pond. It is better to use natural rainwater rather than tap water if you can.

Ask an adult to help you make your wildlife pond safely.

First:

- Dig the hole for your pond. This should be at least two feet deep in the middle and should have a gentle slope at one side so creatures can get out if they fall in.
- Next, line the pond to prevent water from draining away through the soil below.
- Place rocks and gravel around the edges of your pond.
- Fill the pond (or wait for it to fill) with water.
- Place plants. (An adult will be able to help you find and place plants that do well in and around a pond).

Watch your pond carefully. It will likely not be very long before the wildlife starts to move in.

Make a Bee Hotel

Another cool way to attract helpful wildlife to your garden is to build a 'hotel' for bees or bugs to live in.



To make a bee hotel you will need:

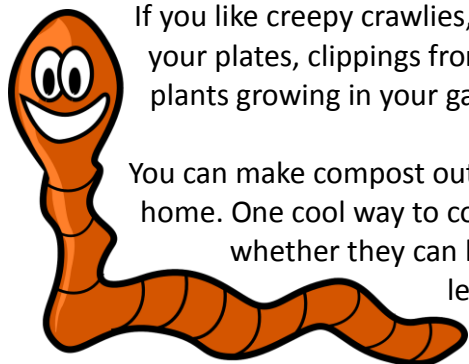
- A wooden box or other open-ended container.
- Lengths of bamboo cane or other hollow stemmed reeds or grasses. (Or logs with holes drilled in the ends (ask an adult for help to make the holes.)
- Clippers to carefully cut canes or hollow stems to the right lengths.

Simply cut the lengths of bamboo or other hollow stems so they fit, then place them inside your box or container. Place your bee hotel in a sunny spot, at least a metre off the ground, with nothing blocking the entrance. If you are lucky, bees will soon move in and live inside the holes. You can watch the bees as they buzz about and help the plants in your garden.

If you enjoyed making your bee hotel, you could also make a range of other 'hotels' for other garden creatures to stay in. Put branches, sticks and leaves into a quiet corner, and this will create a home for a wide range of creatures.

If you want to attract even more wildlife to your garden, ask for some help to plant flowers and other plants to attract a range of creatures.

Work with Wiggling Worms



If you like creepy crawlies, you may also enjoy learning how to turn the food you leave on your plates, clippings from your garden, and other household rubbish into food to feed plants growing in your garden. This process is called making compost.

You can make compost outside in your garden or even in a smaller container inside your home. One cool way to compost is with the help of wiggling worms. Ask someone whether they can help you make a wormery. Making a wormery is a fun way to learn about how materials break down to create a crumbly brown material that you can use to give your plants the food they need to grow.

To make a wormery you will need:

- A container – somewhere for worms to live, and materials to be broken down into compost.
- Food scraps, paper, cardboard and perhaps other waste from your garden.
- The worms themselves.

You could be in charge of making sure that the worms are happy. You have to keep them at the right temperature, and make sure that the wormery is not too wet or too dry. You also have to add material to the wormery a little at a time, and then remove the finished compost from the wormery when it is ready. Keeping a wormery is like having a load of little, wriggling pets. But at the end of the process, you also get compost that can help you grow more food in your garden.

Make a Compost-Cake Container

Whether you have a compost heap outside in your garden, or have created a wormery, there is a range of different ways to use the compost that you have created. One way to use it is to add the topping to a new container garden.

You can make your very own container garden and use it to grow your own favourite plants. Making a new growing area like this is like making a cake. In an organic garden, the best way to make a new growing area is to build up a mixture of green and brown materials that will break down over time to make compost. You have to add the different ingredients and then mix them all together.

To make a new compost-cake container garden you will need:

- A container. (There are plenty of things that you could use as containers. Why not think about using something that might otherwise be thrown away?)
- Sticks, twigs, dry leaves, cardboard or other 'brown' natural materials.
- Green natural materials like leaves and grass clippings (as well as food scraps from your kitchen).
- A layer of compost/soil to form the planting surface – this is where you can place your young plants or plant your seeds.

First – go on a scavenger hunt to find materials to use as containers, and to fill your container.

Next – mix up your brown and green materials and fill most of your container.

Then – top up the container to the brim with soil or compost.

Finally – water the container well, and sow seeds or plant plants into it.

Plant a Fairy Garden



There are lots of different things that you can plant into your containers or into the beds or growing areas in your garden. One idea is to plant a fairy garden. Everyone knows that fairies love sweet and pretty things. What sweet and pretty things could you grow?

How about planting some strawberries, some peas, and some edible flowers like pansies or nasturtiums? Super colourful rainbow chard is another fun fairy plant. Fairies might also like plants that smell nice – how about some herbs, like mint? Ask an adult to get you some seeds, or plants that you can put in your fairy garden.

As well as sowing seeds and placing plants in your fairy garden, you should also think about how your fairy will get around in the fairy garden, and where they will live.

Collect some little stones, shells or other items to make a little path so your fairy friends can get around in the jungle of plants as they grow.

At the end of the path, why not place a little house for your fairy to live in?

You could make a fairy house using the things you can find in your garden, such as bark, twigs and moss. Use your imagination as you create this craft project.

Plant Seeds and Have a 'Race'



When you have created places to grow your plants, why not get together with a brother, sister or friend and have a 'race' between plants? Choose seeds and then plant them at the same time. See whose plant grows first, and whose grows fastest. See which plant grows taller by a certain time.

This can be especially fun with plants like sunflowers. Sunflowers can grow pretty quickly, and they can grow really tall! See whether you can grow a sunflower that is taller than you.

Making sure that your plant gets enough sunlight, water and food can help you to win the 'race'. Keep your plant happy and healthy and it will reach for the skies!

Make a Magic Potion for Plants

One way to give your plants the edge is to make a 'magic potion' to help them grow. While these potions are not really magic, they are plant feeds which will make sure that your plants have the food they need to grow.

To make a magic potion for your plants you will need:

- A big bucket or another container to make the potion in. (with a lid, or something to cover it).
- A big stick to stir it.
- Water.
- The other ingredients for your magic potion.

There are a range of different ingredients that you can use to make plant feeds for your garden.

For example, you can use:

- Nettles or other weed leaves (make sure you wear gloves when picking nettles, so you don't get stung).
- Seaweed from the beach. (Wash seaweed to get rid of excess salt before you add it to your bucket.)
- Compost from your compost heap or wormery.

Put your weeds, seaweed and/or compost into your bucket and add water. Use your big stick to give everything a good stir and make sure all the material is underneath the water.

Put the lid on the bucket, or cover it over.

You will now have to wait for a few weeks until your potion is ready.

After a few weeks, when you lift the lid on the bucket, you will find a very stinky brew! Pass the mixture through a sieve and put it into a bottle or a watering can. You can then use your magic potion to water your plants.

Make a Bean Tipi

This project allows you to grow stuff and make a cool den in your garden. To make a bean tipi you will need:

- 5-10 Long bamboo canes or long, thin branches.
- String or twine to tie the tops of the canes together.
- Bean seeds to plant.

First, decide where you want to put your bean tipi and mark out a rough circle.

Next, push the ends of your canes or branches into the soil around that circle, bend them into the centre of the circle so that they meet in the middle. Tie the tops of the canes together to make them into a tent-like structure. (Be sure to leave a gap on one side that is big enough to allow you to get inside.

Plant your beans, two at the base of each cane. When they grow, you will have a nice shady den to play in.



Make a Sleeping Giant Garden Bed

For a bit of fun, why not make a new growing area in your garden look like a sleeping giant? To make a sleeping giant garden bed you will need:

- Some branches and logs.
- Some sticks, twigs, leaves and other green things like grass clippings.
- Some compost or soil.

- Stones, rocks or shells for your giant's eyes, nose and mouth.
- A range of different seeds to make your giant's clothes and hair.

First, decide where your sleeping giant will lie. Mark out the giant's body.

Make a skeleton for your giant out of logs and branches.

Cover the giant's skeleton with twigs, leaves and other green things.

Cover these layers with a layer of compost and/or soil.

Finally, plant different types of seeds. As they grow, these plants can look like your giant's clothes and hair. Have some fun deciding which seeds to sow.

These are just some of many amazing projects you can enjoy in an organic garden. What other cool ideas can you come up with?