

NOVA SCOTIA ASSOCIATION OF GARDEN CLUBS (NSAGC)

CREATING CHILDRENS WORKSHOPS

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for clubs interested in providing children's gardening workshops. The workshops will help kids develop a greater understanding of where food and flowers come from and they will have fun while learning about gardening.

Guidelines:

- 1) **Identify the group** you will work with (i.e. school class, Brownies/Beavers, individuals by registration, other).
- 2) **How many** can you include in the workshop? This will depend on the number of club members and/or others available to help, age range of children, space and project.
- 3) **Choose a location** for workshop: indoors or outside? Community hall, school, homes, library, etc. If a school class is involved be sure the teacher is OK with the extra work that will be involved in watering, moving trays of seedlings to get the sun, some messes to clean up, etc. Teachers may need some guidelines if they're not familiar with the process.
- 4) **How many sessions** can you offer? One time only or ongoing over a period of time?
- 5) **Decide on project:** i.e. starting seeds indoors, starting a vegetable garden with transplants, basic flower arrangements, garden-related crafts. You might offer to co-ordinate with a Library story time around Mother's Day to start a flower seed or do a little flower bouquet to take home (an hour is long enough) or spend a morning with a school class at Christmas making an evergreen centerpiece.
- 6) **Co-ordinate** the workshop in advance: what supplies are needed, can you get material donated or do you have to purchase it, what member's responsibilities will be, time frame for project and clean up. If going outdoors you may need parent's verbal or written consent.
- 7) **Projects must be hands-on** with information in line with the age of the children. Keep projects fairly basic but interesting.
- 8) **Remember** that even garden failures are learning experiences. If the children have enjoyed the process they will have learned something and will remember it. Many kids have "Nature Deficit Disorder": just being outdoors will be beneficial to them.

Helpful Hints:

- 1) Teach the difference between dirty and germy. Organic soil is not dirty. Getting your hands "dirty" is OK when gardening. Be sure to wash well afterwards.
- 2) Talk about the names of flowers and vegetables: alyssum to zinnia, Artichokes to Zucchini.
- 3) Talk about plants with animal names: Lamb's ears, Rabbit's foot clover, Pig weed, Cowslips, Hens & Chicks etc.
- 4) Explore bugs in the garden, talk about pollinators, good insects.

Suggestions for fun workshops:

- 1) Start flowers from seeds. Sunflowers can grow to 2' in a month, large varieties are impressive, seeds become food for birds and can be saved for planting next year. Marigolds and nasturtiums are also good choices. Seeds can be started in egg cartons on a

windowsill or in a zip-lock bag with moistened paper towels. Transfer to the garden when time is right.

- 2) Make your own birdseed and feeder. It is easy to find ideas in books and online. Utilize your local libraries for information: a good winter project.
- 3) A few interested children may like a flower arranging session with a view to participating in a local flower show.
- 4) Plant brightly colored flowers to attract butterflies.
- 5) Build a bug hotel.
- 6) Plant a pizza garden: tomatoes, basil, green peppers, onions, and oregano in a circle divided into wedge shaped sections.
- 7) Plant potatoes in a ten-gallon bucket of seaweed (drainage holes needed).
- 8) Build a pole bean teepee.