

# HORTICULTURAL YOUTH SOCIETY NEWSLETTER SPRING 2010



Cicada - Photo by Rad Dad

"The most important thing in life is not  
what we are in the eyes of others,  
but what we are in the eyes of our God"

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Click on YOUTH in the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> column.



**Please:** if you are no longer the youth leader then please forward this copy to the proper person.  
**Note:** For all leaders' names changes or cancellations, would you please inform either/or both, the  
OHA Youth Chair: Anna Peterson, 519-284-0179, 284-0179 email: [agp3@quadro.net](mailto:agp3@quadro.net), and/or  
OHA Secretary: Janet Moyser, 519-395-0227, e-mail [janetmoyser@tnt.21com](mailto:janetmoyser@tnt.21com) - Thanks, Rad Dad.

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**INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE**

Source: supporter.services@natureconservancy.ca

“Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed... We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in.”

— Wallace Stegner, Historian & Novelist

**OH CANADA**

Oh Canada so green and blue  
with so many things to do  
with four seasons  
all in one place  
And the people to enjoy  
Land and company with such grace  
Hockey figures and all winter sports  
Enhance activities of all sorts

— Angela Renner – Grade 6 – W.F Hewwitt P.S.

**STRAWBERRIES NUTRITION**

140 grams of the daily value of vitamin C  
12 % of the daily value for dietary fiber  
Just 7 grams of sugar, lowest of the top fruits  
A source of folate and potassium  
Just 45 calories

**A VERY BERRY-SWEET WAKE-UP SHAKE.**

250 mL / 1 cup strawberries  
1 medium banana, in pieces  
250 mL / 1 cup milk  
125 mL / ½ cup plain or flavoured yogurt  
15 – 30 mL / 1 – 2 tbsp honey  
nutmeg, optional  
Reserve 3 strawberries.  
In a blender container, combine remaining strawberries, banana, milk, yogurt and honey. Cover, blend at medium-low speed until thick and smooth. Pour into chilled glasses, sprinkle with nutmeg. Garnish each with a whole strawberry.

Makes 3 servings. 160 cal, 2 g fat, 6 g protein, 11 carbs. 70 mg sodium, 2 g dietary fibre per 180 g / ¾ cup.

**A KITTEN**

A kitten, a poor innocent  
little kitten, sitting in  
the window of a pet shop,  
The look on its face makes  
me feel I need to do  
something.  
But what,  
I don't know,  
Then it starts to purr and What to do  
do - meow  
What to do,  
What to do,  
O don't know,  
It starts scratching the  
window and starts crying.  
What should I do?  
I know, I'll buy it,  
Take it home  
And name it Innocence.

— Teresa Moore – Grade 6  
Walsingham P.S.

## HOW TO AIR DRY FLOWERS

Source: allfreecrafts.com

The art of air drying flowers for use in homemade dried flower arrangements has been practiced for centuries. It is a simple art, yet dried flowers can be arranged just as beautifully as fresh bouquets in vases, containers or even shadow boxes. They also, of course, make excellent garlands, swags and wreaths.

Since air-drying flowers and foliage is inexpensive and easy to do, it is also a suitable nature activity for children. As a nature project, begin with a nature walk to collect the fresh plant materials, including a variety of garden and wildflowers, grasses and seedpods; finish by assembling the dried materials into unique decorations for your home or for the kids to give as gifts.

### Follow these steps to ensure the best results for your air-dried flowers

- Select flowers a little ahead of their peak bloom and well before any petals began to drop from the flower head.
- Ideally, pick flowers with a minimum of 5 cm / 2" on the stem; 5 – 11 cm / 6-12" is preferred for long-stemmed flowers.
- If possible, avoid flowers on stems with side buds.
- Make sure your selected specimens are quite dry and free of dew or raindrops; wet foliage or petals causes moldy flowers.
- Prevent wilting by placing the flowers in a container of fresh water until you're ready to work with them.
- Pick the most perfect specimens you can find and avoid diseased plants or those damaged by insects.
- Select the flowers and foliage with an eye to shape and color; brighter colors will remain brighter when dried, while stems with a natural arch or sweeping curve lend depth and shape to your dried floral arrangements.
- Dry more than you think you will need to allow for spoilage or breakage.

### Air Drying Flowers in Water

Traditionally, flowers and herbs are hung upside down to air dry, but there are also many flowers that dry out equally well if left to stand in a vase of water. Granted, the process is slower, but this way you can enjoy the fresh flowers first, then observe the process as the flowers gradually lose moisture, change color, and dry out completely.

This method is especially useful for a bouquet that has been purchased from a flower shop as flowers dried this way may keep the shape of the original arrangement with stems curving outward in an appealing fashion. Garden flowers that I've dried successfully in water include perennial baby's breath (*gypsophila*), carnations, coral-bells, black-eyed Susan, dahlias, purple coneflowers, rosebuds, roses and yarrow.

At a certain point, of course, you must stop topping up the water in the vase and just let the flowers use up what is left, or toss out the water completely and let the flowers finish the preservation process standing upright in the dry vase. This way the stems also have a chance to dry and become firm enough to support the dried flower head.

### Air Drying Flowers, Herbs and Foliage by Hanging Upside Down

The procedure for air-drying flowers and other plants by hanging upside down isn't complicated, but these hints will help ensure good results:

- Remove leaves and heavy foliage from the stem below the flower. Some flower stems, such as those on centaurea, strawflowers or zinnias, weaken when dried and should be replaced, before drying, by wires.
- You can use wire to promote a curved stem. Simply insert florist wire into the flower head then twist around the stem a few times. You can now use the wire to bend the stem in the shape that you would like it to have once dry; leave the wire in place for added strength.
- Arrange a bunch of stems together and fasten toward the end of the stems with a rubber band, twine or even clothes pegs. Try leaving some bunches hanging straight down; gently fan out the stems on others to provide an assortment of straight and curved stems.
- Suspend the flower bunches from nails, lattice or hooks in a dry, dark, warm place such as an attic or basement. Keep away from direct sunlight, which can fade the flowers, and choose a spot that offers good air circulation.
- Suspend larger flower heads, such as peonies, as single specimens for optimum drying.
- Check your flowers often - some flowers will dry in as little as three days while others will need three weeks. Touch the flowers - if they are dry and rigid, and rustle when you move them, they are ready to be moved to a dry, cool location.
- Remember that native grasses, grains, seedpods, berries and cones can be readily gathered in the fall, when many have already dried on the stem. If you need to complete the drying process, just follow the steps outlined above.

Dried seedpods such as poppy heads, milkweed or the "cones" from purple coneflower are sought after by florists and will make interesting additions to your homemade dried floral arrangements. Stems of golden wheat, reed grass, rushes, teasels and dried berries are also useful for decorating wreaths and swags.

Dried flowers aren't intended as a permanent arrangement; ideally, they should be renewed each year with freshly dried bounty from your garden or the roadside. If you do pick wildflowers, please observe all local and national laws - and never pick or disturb endangered species.

## **SEASHELL WIND CHIMES:**

Source: allfreecrafts.com

**Supplies:** Assorted seashells, twine, craft glue, twigs or craft sticks.

**Directions:** Arrange the sticks in a cross shape, and wind a small amount of twine around the center of the sticks to secure them together. Leave a circle of twine at the top to serve as a hanger.

Tie a length of twine to each end of the crossed sticks. Cut each piece of twine to the same length and glue a seashell to the end. Tie four more pieces of twine between the end of each stick and the center of the wind chime. Make these four strings about the same length as well.

Finally, add one more piece of twine from the center of the crossed sticks. The length of this piece can be shorter or longer than the rest. Add a large, pretty seashell to this string. Let the glue dry, then hang your wind chime where the seashells will tinkle together in a gentle breeze.



Photo by rad-dad

## **BUTTERFLY GARDENS**

Source: allfreecrafts.com

### **Make Butterfly Food and Butterfly Feeders**

In addition to selective planting of flowers and shrubs, there are many simple ways to offer butterflies their food. These alternative butterfly food sources, like over-ripe fruit or homemade butterfly nectar, are called "attractants." Attractants will lure butterflies to your yard even if it isn't an ideal wildflower meadow.

### **Easy Butterfly food**

Butterflies use a variety of food sources to sustain them, including such tasty delights as over-ripe fruit and rotting vegetation. If you own an apple, plum, cherry or pear tree, simply allowing fallen fruit to ferment on the ground will create a favorite feeding spot for butterflies.

Don't throw out those last bananas; mushy strawberries, too-soft peaches or nectarines, extra orange slices or leftover melon ends either! Instead, follow the directions below to make an easy butterfly feeder for fruit!

One inexpensive source of over-ripe fruit is the "fast sale" stand in the produce section of your grocery store; you might even get the produce manager to donate one or two unsaleable pieces of fruit if you explain the purpose.

Save extra bananas in the freezer - the skin will turn black and unsightly, but the mushy fruit that results when you defrost the bananas will delight many butterflies and moths.

### **Easy Butterfly Feeder for Food**

A ceramic or glass pie plate, plastic or terra cotta plant saucer, or a dish with a sloping rim can all be used to make easy butterfly feeders. Suspend the plate with flowerpot hangers or fashion a macramé style holder from household twine. You could wind the stems of silk or plastic flowers around the twine holder to decorate the butterfly feeder and make it visually appealing.

Simply hang the feeder from the bough of a shady tree, in a spot where you can easily view visitors to the feeder. Try to place it a little higher than your highest flowers. Add slices of over-ripe fruit. You can sprinkle a little fruit juice or water over the fruit slices if they dry out too much - remember it's the mushy, rotting, very over-ripe fruit that butterflies like best. Replace the fruit if it dries out or becomes moldy.

## **HOMEADE BUTTERFLY NECTAR RECIPE AND NECTAR FEEDER** Source: allfreecrafts.com

In *Butterfly Gardening in Containers*, released by Texas A & M University, Master Gardener Bobbie Truell says:

"An alternative food source for butterflies is a homemade feeder filled with a solution of 4 parts water to 1 part granulated sugar. Boil the solution for several minutes until sugar is dissolved, and then let cool. Serve the solution in a shallow container with an absorbent material such as paper towels saturated with the sugar solution. Bright yellow and orange kitchen scouring pads may be placed in the solution to attract butterflies and give them a resting place while they drink. Place the feeder among your nectar flowers on a post that's 4-6 inches higher than the tallest blooms. Extra solution can be stored in your refrigerator for up to a week." **HOMEMADE BUTTERFLY JAR FEEDER FOR NECTAR** Source: allfreecrafts.com

### **You will need:**

- a small glass jar with a lid that seals well
- a piece of cotton or other clean absorbent material
- homemade butterfly nectar (4 parts water to 1 part sugar, boiled and cooled)
- twine
- Optional decorations: yellow, orange or red plastic scouring pads; paint that will adhere to glass and sealer, or silk or plastic flowers



### **What You Do:**

- Punch a small hole in the jar lid with an awl or a hammer and small nail.
- If you wish, insert a colored kitchen-scouring pad to provide an alluring splash of color to attract the butterflies.
- Alternatively, decorate the outside of the jar with waterproof paint (simple, bold flower shapes would be ideal) then finish with clear sealer.
- Another decorative idea is to glue plastic or silk flowers to the outside of your jar.

- Screw the lid firmly onto the jar.
- Plug the hole with sponge, cotton, a length of candle wicking or other absorbent material - you want this material to become saturated with nectar but not to drip, so make sure it plugs the hole tightly.
- Make a macramé style hanger from household twine.
- Invert the jar and hang it close to your flowers.

As with homemade hummingbird food, you will need to clean your feeder every few days, with hot water and a mild 10% bleach solution to inhibit mold. Rinse thoroughly before refilling with butterfly nectar.

### **SPONGE NECTAR FEEDERS:**

Here's another simple nectar feeding idea, from Central Texas Butterfly Gardening by the University of Texas: "Red or orange sponges with sugar solution may be suspended from branches as artificial nectar sources when there are few flowers."

### **HOW TO MAKE HUMMINGBIRD FOOD:**

Bee balm, hollyhock, hibiscus, trumpet honeysuckle, clematis, impatiens, phlox and fuchsias are some of the common flowers that will attract hummingbirds to your garden. But hanging a hummingbird feeder where you can easily see it is probably the best way to observe the hummingbirds in action.

There's no need to buy expensive hummingbird nectar - make your own syrup as per this recipe.

### **Hummingbird Nectar Recipe**

- 1 part sugar/4 parts water
- Boil the water first, then measure and add sugar, at the rate of 50 mL / 1/4 cup of sugar to 250 mL / 1 cup of water.
- Let cool. Store excess in refrigerator.
- Do not add food coloring, honey (which ferments), or artificial sweetener, which has no nutritional value.

You will need to clean your feeder about once a week. According to the National Audubon Society this should be done by: rinsing with one part white vinegar to four parts water. If the feeder is dirty, try adding a few grains of dry rice to the vinegar solution to help scrub it clean. Follow the vinegar wash by rinsing three times with clear, warm water before refilling with sugar solution.

## **SAND-FILLED BOTTLES**

crafts.kaboose.com

Take a bit of the beach home with you by crafting these cool sand-filled bottles. Kids will have fun making these at the beach or cottage and they make a great summer souvenir to take home.

### **What you'll need:**

- Newspaper
- Wax paper
- Colored chalk (as many different colors as you like)
- Clear glass or plastic bottles
- Stick or pencil
- White glue or bottle cap
- Cutting board

### **How to make it:**

- Cover the work surface with newspaper.
- Place a sheet of wax paper on a cutting board.
- Place some sand on the wax paper. Roll a piece of colored chalk across the sand until the sand is completely changed to that color.
- Carefully lift the wax paper and gently shake the sand to the center of the wax paper. Hold both ends of the paper up to use it as a pour spout to pour the colored sand into the bottle. You can use a funnel if you find it easier.
- Use a stick or the eraser end of a pencil to make a few dips in the sand.
- Repeat these steps until you have several colors of sand layered in your bottle(s).
- If you have a cap for your bottle, be sure to fill it completely with sand and press down firmly on the sand to compact it. Place cap on tight.
- If you do not have a bottle cap, fill sand to about 2 cm / ½" from the top of the bottle.
- Compact the sand with a pencil or your finger if it fits in the opening and then fill to the top with glue and let dry.

### **Tips:**

You can use small plastic bottles available at your local craft store or empty jars and bottles that you have on hand. If using sand from the beach, be sure to sift it with a flour sifter first to remove any bits of debris and rock. You can purchase sand from your local craft store.

## **COWS MILK**

A dairy cow gives enough milk to furnish 9 families with 2 – 3 litres of milk every day.

In order to give this much milk, she may eat 45 kg of food and drink a bathtub full of water every day. Two cows give enough milk to make about 1.5 kg of butter or 4 kg of cheese every day. Milk is the source of calcium, which helps develop strong bones and good teeth.

Source:

## **PRESSED FLOWERS**

Source: crafts.kaboose.com

You can use pressed flowers in many different crafts. This particular technique is a good one to get kids involved in since it uses household appliances and objects in unusual ways.

### **What you'll need:**

- Refrigerator
- Microwave
- Two out-dated telephone books
- Two heavy stoneware plates
- Paper towels
- How to make it:
- Cut flowers.

- Place them gently into an old telephone book and place in refrigerator for two days.
- Turn one stone plate face down and place paper towels in bottom center.
- Gently place flowers in a single position, not touching each other.
- Put another layer of paper towels over the flowers.
- Put the other stoneware plate on top of the paper towels matching bottoms.
- Place the plates in the microwave and cook them for 8 minutes on LOW heat.
- Remove them from the microwave and let them cool thoroughly.
- When they are cool, remove them from the paper towels.
- If you aren't ready to use them, put them into another old telephone book and put a weight on it until you are ready to use the flowers.

## **FLOWER PRINTS**

Source: crafts/caboose

Kids will be surprised at how real flowers share their colors when you hammer them onto fabric or paper in this flower prints craft.

### **What you'll need:**

- Paper towels
- Plastic food wrap
- Hammer
- Flowers
- Paper or white T-shirt or plain apron

### **How to make it:**

1. Take the stems off the flowers and lay them out on whatever you are hammering them.
- Place a paper towel under the top layer of the t-shirt so the color won't soak through to the back.
- Put a piece of plastic food wrap on top of the flowers.
  - Hammer the flowers until they are flat.
  - Then take the plastic food wrap off and take off the petals that didn't come off.
  - If you made a t-shirt or apron, soak it in salt water to make it permanent.

## **NEAT GARDEN THING TO DO**

Source: <http://www.icargarden>

**Plant carrot seeds in rocky soil.** Even the staunches veggie-haters tend to like carrots, especially when they're sweet and fresh from the garden. Plant carrots in rocky soil and impress them even more with the mutant, curly and gnarled roots that form as the carrots grow around the rocks.

**Tattoo a pumpkin.** Kids or not, if you've never tried this you should. With pumpkins, or any kind of hard-shell squash, use a pin to draw a face onto the fruit, lightly piercing the skin. As the pumpkin grows and the wound from your piercing scars over, your drawing will show as scabby lines. This trick isn't without risk to the pumpkin, though; any time you compromise the protective skin of fruit you open it up to pests and diseases. Nonetheless, kids and grandparents have been doing this for centuries.

## **BASIC HERB GARDENING NEEDS**

[beginner-gardening.com/herbgardening.html](http://beginner-gardening.com/herbgardening.html)

**Full sun.** The flavour of herbs is in the essential oils produced by the plant. These oils are fully developed in the full hot sun. Some herbs will survive in part shade and will indeed grow (I think mint will grow in a closet) but they will not have the flavour of their sun-baked cousins.

**Moderate feeding** Again, herbs produce more concentrated oils when they are not lush and growing quickly. The oils become more concentrated (and the leaves more flavourful) when the plants are not growing under the influence of fertilizers. Generally, a shovel of compost is plenty of food for any culinary herb in a single season.

**Moderate water** You don't want to let the leaves wilt but again, too much water produces a lush plant. Herbs such as thyme that thrive in dry areas will have less flavour if they are well watered.

**Soil** I grow my herbs in the roughest of ground. They do not get the rich vegetable soils as they would become too lush. But in containers, I use an artificial soil mix (the same one I use for vegetables, flowers and bulbs) to grow my herbs. I simply don't feed them when I feed the flowers. And yes, you can grow any culinary herb in a container.

## **HERB GARDEN MARKERS**

[beginner-gardening.com/herbgardening](http://beginner-gardening.com/herbgardening)

There are several ways to get a good herb garden marker.

The first and most obvious is to purchase the really nice ones that match your garden decor and sense of how you want your garden to look. They come in a wide

variety of materials and styles so it's really a question of what you can afford and what style you like.

### **Stones**

You can easily use a permanent magic marker on flat stones. Once you get the feel for writing on stone with a fine or medium tip pen, you can quickly make your own markers for the cost of some time and effort. Dig the rocks out of your own garden. The advantage of this kind of marker is that it is inexpensive and permanent. A little sandpaper on a drill pad will remove the writing if you decide in a year or two to renew or change the writing.

### **Stakes**

I have used wooden stakes in the past with great success. Stakes come in a wide range of styles and woods. I had a large quantity of pressure treated dividers from the pallets in lumberyards and these worked well in the nursery. A little sanding to smooth them off and I could write in magic marker or my favourite pencil to give a good result. I note that pencil will outlast magic marker on wooden stakes. You can purchase large stakes from a lumber store or cut your own to size for your own garden and to make your own personalized herb garden markers.

Smaller wooden stakes are often available in packages from garden supply shops and I've used these as well. They aren't as conspicuous in the garden and can get knocked over and buried easily. Use a pencil on these and they work very well for both seed starting of herbs as well as later in the garden for a single season use as they rot after one winter.

### **Plastic**

Some gardeners like plastic stakes and purchase packages of commercial stakes from garden shops. I've never liked plastic tags in the garden but I have used them on occasion. They go brittle after one season in the sun so you can either replace them or bury them at the head of the row so sunlight doesn't affect them.

Put them in the same place for every row and plant and you'll be able to find them when you want. You can use a permanent magic marker or pencil on these. Some frugal gardeners use old yogurt or tall plastic tubs to cut their own plastic tags for their herb garden markers.

Whatever system you use, do plan on marking the individual varieties of plants so that if you grow several varieties of basil or thyme, you can "remember" which is which a week after you've planted them. :-) Not that we forget these things of course but that's why we have plant markers in our gardens.

## **MAKING BAMBOO WIND CHIMES**

Source: kiddiegardens.com

**You will need:** a length of bamboo cane or two, some string or yarn (not too thick and preferably synthetic as it will last longer), a saw, and a very small drill. A metal or wooden ring is also useful but optional.

You will want one length of bamboo about 25 – 30 cm / 10" - 12 " long for the top of the chime, and at least 6 further lengths to hang down. These can be of varying lengths to produce different tones, or all the same length, in which case they will produce much the same tone when they bang into each other.

We prefer cutting the bamboo various different lengths for our bamboo wind chime, simply because it looks and sound more interesting. One idea is to measure the first one 4 inches long, then each subsequent length 1 inch longer than the previous one. Saw them carefully - **ADULTS ONLY.**

While making the chime, try gently banging the lengths together to explore the different tones they make ... several of ours have been turned into drumsticks instead!

With the saw (or a sharp serrated knife) cut fine grooves in the top length of bamboo, spaced evenly, equivalent to the number of lengths you will have dangling from it - **ADULTS ONLY.**

**Tip:** Make your bamboo wind chimes colourful by painting the lengths different colours!

### **Tip:**

Use a needle and thread to pull the string through the holes ... tie the string to the end of the thread.

Very carefully drill a hole through the top of each length of bamboo, with the exception of the top piece. Insert the string through the holes, and loop it around the top piece, ensuring it falls neatly into one of the grooves. Allow a couple of inches between the top of each piece of bamboo and the horizontal length (so they can dangle freely but not get completely knotted up!).

Finally pull a length of twine or string through the length of the top piece, tying them together about 15 cm / 6" above the center of the horizontal. You can either tie them simply using a knot, or through a ring, or better even, through a large button - this ensures your bamboo wind chime is nicely balanced.

Finally, hang your work of art up somewhere where you will be able to hear and admire it for years to come, but where you won't keep banging your head on it! You can either hang the chime from a hook, or tie more string to it and dangle it from a branch or similar outside ... though the birds would appreciate it if you could place it a little way from their feeder!

## **GARDENING FOR KIDS**

Source: canadiangardening.com

By Elizabeth Hawksworth

Gardening is a great way to educate children about the importance of keeping green and saving the environment.

If you're looking for a great family project (and ways to get your kids outside and active), why not involve your kids in your gardening? It's a lot of fun and teaches them about responsibility.

We've compiled a list of ways your kids can get involved in the garden!

**1.** Start by creating a space where your child can plant and care for his or her garden. This can be a small section of the main garden or a small flowerbed that's all their own. Container gardening is a good indoor option where outdoor space is limited.

**2.** Browse the seed catalogues or search on the Internet with your child to start choosing plants and seeds. Consider plants that are easy to grow. Tomato plants, mint or annual flowers, such as colourful sunflowers, are some great options.

**3.** Before shopping for plants, prepare the soil. There's nothing worse than having to wait to start the fun – and the plants will appreciate a flowerbed that's ready for them, too.

**4.** Depending on how your child learns, you can choose to germinate plants from seeds or buy cell packs of ready-grown seedlings. Watching a plant grow from a seed teaches a child patience and responsibility, but if they can't wait, an easier way is to help them look after seedlings.

**5.** Help your child create a theme for the garden – it can be colour, flowers or favourite vegetables. Letting your child choose a garden ornament or two can brighten up their flowerbed, and make it their own.

**6.** On rainy days when they can't get out to see how their plants are doing encourage your child to create a birdhouse or bird feeder (make sure to use non-toxic paint).

**7.** Help make your child's garden a place to play, too. A bean tepee or a sunflower forest offers little hideaways.

**8.** Be sure to include edible plants and flowers that can be tasted and touched. This makes gardening a truly interactive experience!

Getting down and dirty with your children in the garden can be a bonding experience as you watch the plants grow and flourish together.

## **PROJECT TOAD HOUSE**

Source: [www.garden01.com](http://www.garden01.com)

We renovated our house about a year ago. The intense work left us with plenty of rubbish. I tend to live the philosophy "one day I will need that". Some of the treasures we have are our bricks. They were made sometime in the beginning of the 20th century and they have a nice stamp of the local brick factory. I use them for flowerbeds and other small constructions in the garden. In the spring my son and I decided to give a new home to our toad friends.

Toads are great helpers in the garden because they eat a lot of nasty garden enemies, including human enemies like mosquitoes and flies. Therefore to attract them is a good idea. Toads like shade, a moist place to hide, and soft sandy soil to borrow when it is dry outside.



On a paper we drew the plan for the toad residence. No building permission was needed so we started. On a sandy hill we flattened out the area. We used some side roof tiles as a residence. Around the residence we built a bed, filled it with soil and we planted strawberries. The residence is done. We don't know if there are some toads but we have seen a lizard running around. We can't discriminate! Lizards are equally welcome.

## **SPORE PRINTS FOR KIDS**

Source: [tlc.howstuffworks.com](http://tlc.howstuffworks.com)

Whether you forage for them in wild or buy them at your local grocery store, you can use any type of mushroom to make spore prints.

### **What You'll Need:**

- Mushroom caps
- White unlined index cards
- Black paper
- Drinking glass or bowl
- Hair spray or acrylic fixative

**Step 1:** Find a mushroom in the wild, or get some from the store. (Be careful when handling wild mushrooms -- don't eat them!) You will have to find some with the caps open. Look underneath the cap. The gills inside are lined with structures that make and release spores by the millions. Each spore can grow into a new fungus.

**Step 2:** Cover half of an index card with black paper.

**Step 3:** Pop out the stem from the mushroom cap and place the cap on the card so that half is on the black paper and half on the white.

**Step 4:** Cover with a glass or bowl and let the cap sit overnight.

**Step 5:** The next day remove the glass and the mushroom cap. You should see a print of the mushroom spores. Pale spores will show up on the black paper, while darker ones will show on the white.

**Step 6:** Ask an adult to spray the print with hair spray or acrylic fixative to keep it from smearing.

## **EGGS**

A hen will lay one egg a day for about 240 days a year, enough to fill 20 egg cartons. It takes 21 days for an egg to hatch and produce a baby chick. Eight weeks later the chicken is large enough to be marketed. It will have eaten about 3.85 kg of feed in this time and will "dress out" at about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of its live weight.

## **GRASS PRINTS FOR KIDS**

Source: [tlc.howstuffworks.com](http://tlc.howstuffworks.com)

The same kind of grass you see out on your lawn can be used to make beautiful artwork. Learn how to make grass prints for kids, below.

### **What You'll Need:**

- Grasses of various kinds (include seed heads)
- Paper
- Wax paper
- Water-based paints
- Paintbrush
- Cloth (optional)

**Step 1:** Lay your grasses out on a table and choose those you like the best.

**Step 2:** Arrange the grasses you like on paper. Try making interesting contrasts between lacy seed heads and thick grass blades.

**Step 3:** Lay the grass on wax paper.

**Step 4:** Load a brush with paint and dab the paint on the grass until it is thinly but fully coated on one side.

**Step 5:** Lift the painted grass from the wax paper and lay it, paint side down, on the paper you want to print.

**Step 6:** Lay another sheet of wax paper on top and press gently so that the grass makes good contact with the paper.

**Step 7:** Remove the wax paper and grass.

Watercolor paint works on white paper, while tempera looks nice on colored paper. Use fabric paint on cloth to make beautiful grass-printed T-shirts and bandannas!

## **FEED THEM – WATER THEM – GET THE SOIL**

### **RIGHT: Knowing that, you know it all!**

Source: douggreengarden.com

So you want a great garden and you really want to know what's important. In a nutshell, there are three things that make and break your garden, lawn, containers, baskets, trees and shrubs and just about anything else you can dream of to grow or ask about.

Here's what you really need to know.

- 1) *Feed them*
- 2) *Water Them.*
- 3) *Get the Soil Right*

#### **Feed Them.**

With annual flowers and vegetables you want superior growth so you're going to apply a balanced, organic plant food once a month for the entire growing season. You can apply it in fertilizer such as alfalfa pellets or through a hose end sprayer using fish emulsion or a soybean based liquid-feed.

**For perennials and roses**, a single feeding early in the season with the pellets will keep them growing all season long but if you want to spoil them, feed once a month (beginning of the month) for May, June and July with liquid fish emulsion. Do not do it after July, as you want the plants to harden off – getting them toughened for the upcoming winter.

**For trees and shrubs.** Feed plants organic fertilizer late in the fall, after all the leaves have fallen, and the entire garden is dormant. The feed will dissolve into the ground and the roots will pick it up and make it ready for the leaves first thing in the spring. You'll get better results with a fall feeding of trees and shrubs than you will with a spring feeding.

#### **Water Them**

Water is the engine of plant growth. Period. Without water, nothing else happens so if you want to see great gardens, then you have to water. You can feed all you like, complain all you like about the cost but it's a choice – water them or watch them struggle. Plants will often survive on natural water but seldom thrive in a garden setting. If you want plants to thrive, then you need to provide 2 ½ cm / 1" of water a week on average soils for flower and vegetable gardens.

If in the shade of trees, you need to increase that to 5 cm / 2" of water a week (some for the trees and some for the plants)

#### **For gardens and vegetable beds**

Drip irrigation is cheaper to install, easier to maintain and puts the water where the plants need it. Overhead sprinklers waste 50% of the water you apply to evaporation before the water gets to the plant roots.

#### **Getting The Soil Right.**

The easy way to get your garden soil right for flowers is to do two things:

#### **Put down permanent mulch.**

It can be hardwood chips, pine bark or whatever you like the look of and can afford. This is going to do a great many wonderful things in your garden starting with reducing moisture loss, preventing weeds from germinating, decomposing to feed your plants, stopping disease from spreading to lower leaves and giving beneficial insects a place to hide during the day. You want these beneficial insects by the way because they hunt the pests eating your plants.

Do not use peat moss, as it doesn't wet easily, or shredded paper or cardboard in deep layers, as it turns into paper mache and become impervious to water, so stick to organic material.

Using stone or rubber mulch is asking for problems. Pull mulch away from the crowns of perennials so excess water doesn't rot them – and away from the stems of shrubs (mice may hide under the mulch coming out to feed on the tender bark of shrubs). An 8 cm / 3" layer of mulch is about average for most flowerbeds.

- **Top it up every fall** because it will degrade. Note: that you want this degradation because this is what is feeding your plants and creating your great soil under there. Mulch degrades and keeps all the good microorganisms in your soil alive and happy one of several reasons, not to use rubber or stone.

- **Every spring** throw compost along with the organic fertilizer on top of the mulch around the plants that are there. Yes, organic compost is best but the cheaper composted manure works too. Just understand that it isn't certified as organic because of the chemicals used in beef production and that these sometimes get passed through in the manure.

**That's It!** Doing just those three things will allow you to grow a fine crop of annual plants, most vegetables, perennials as well as hedges and flowering shrubs.

If I were only to spend money on three things in the garden, it would be the feeding, the watering and keeping mulch at the deep level. And the plants of course - always the plants

### **KEEPING PLANT GROWTH CHART**

Source: 4H Horticulture Grow Your Own

- Choose some plants that grow fairly upright, such as corn, beans, staked tomatoes, peas on a trellis, peppers, onions, or spinach.
- Each week measure the height of the plants from germination to harvest. Record the information. Make sure you measure the same plants each time.
- At the end of the season, make a graph of the records. Put the number of days or weeks on a horizontal x-axis, and centimeters of growth on a vertical y-axis.

This would be a good experiment to do in pairs or groups so there would be more to compare. If doing it alone, measure 3 plants each time. Label them so you know which are plant 1, plant 2 and plant 3. The centimetres of rainfall could be recorded on the same graph. Then, note on the graph the slow growth times. Were they because of dry weather, fruit set, etc.?

### **RAIN GAUGE**

Source: 4H Horticulture Grow Your Own

- Remove the label from a clean tin can.
  - With a ruler, measure and mark a line ever 2 cm up from the bottom inside the can. Use a waterproof marker or a wax pencil crayon.
- Put the can in the garden. Check it often over the next week and successive weeks. If rain doesn't add up to 2 – 2-½ cm in a week, then your garden needs to be watered.
- Record the rainfall and dump out the water.
- Note how often you had to water your garden during the growing season.
- Did you find this to be a useful tool?

### **INSECT COLLECTION**

Make an insect collection of at least five fruit, vegetable or herb pests. Properly mount and identify. You could also consider beneficial ones.

### **WEED COLLECTION**

Make a weed collection of at least five weeds found in fruit, vegetable or herb gardens. Press the weeds and mount them and cover them with clear plastic.

### **LAVENDER SACHET**

Source: Chatelaine July 2007

This easy-to-make item will keep your room smelling fresh and summery all year long.

- From a vintage scarf, cut a square 20cm x 20cm x 20cm / 8"x8"x8", using the hemming edge of the scarf as one side.
- Fold in half, right side in, and pin together.
- Sew two sides up, leaving the hemmed edge along the top. Do not sew closed.
- Turn right side out.
- Fill with lavender, and tie with a length of ribbon.
- Thread a second length of ribbon through the tied end of the sachet, and make a large loop. Tie a knot and hide it in the first ribbon.
- Hang on a hanger and refresh the lavender as it loses its fragrance. You can also add a few drops of lavender essential oils to revive the fragrance.

### **SETTLERS WILDWOOD REMEDIES or SIMPLES**

#### **Balm for Wounds: Balsam Fir.**

The gum was considered a sovereign remedy for wounds, inside or out; it may still be used today as healing salve, usually spread on a piece of linen and laid over the wound for a dressing