

How to grow a gardener

If you haven't yet introduced your child to the joys of gardening, perhaps this is the year. Gardening combines two things kids love: the dirt and the outdoors. SunlightLaundry.ca shows you how to nurture a lifelong passion in your kids.

Give them a personal patch

Even if it's just a spot for your toddler to dig a muddy hole or for your nine year-old to examine bugs, having their own garden gives kids a sense of adventure and pride.

Leave room for good old-fashioned digging

Don't urge your child to fill in all the holes they inevitably dig. Holes make a great landscape feature. Kids can look for worms in holes, bury treasures or add water to attract water bugs, frogs and thirsty birds.

Guarantee kid gratification

Encourage kids to start some plants from seeds so they can see the growth cycle from seed to bloom (sunflowers are particularly kid-friendly and sprout within eight weeks; radishes within four). So they don't lose interest in the meantime, visit a nursery and let your kids pick out blossoming plants, such as pansies that they can plant in the ground and enjoy now.

Break the rules

So what if the plant rows are crooked or your child has decided to put tomatoes next to the daisies? Remember that the real beauty of a child's garden is his being able to say, "I did it myself."

Find a fun theme

Get kids excited by planting a theme garden. Choose plants that attract butter-



flies, and you have a butterfly garden. Choose chocolate cosmos for a chocolatey scent and chocolate mint for a minty scent, and you have an ice-cream sundae garden. Find plants starting with the letters of your child's first name, and you have a "name garden". Be inventive and create your own theme with your child.

—News Canada

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