

Home & Garden

Fast-growing plants best when gardening with kids

Children of all ages can benefit from working in a garden.

"It's the best idea (getting children involved in a garden)," said John Moncada from Sicilia Gardens Inc. in Stouffville.

"It matures the child. It's something they can take care of."

Older children can help prepare the garden for planting by turning over the old soil and adding new soil to it, said Moncada.

Once the garden is ready, children can help choose which seeds to plant.

Beans, peas, tomatoes, lettuce, onions and cucumbers are the best seeds to plant with children because they are hardy and grow quickly.

"Within a month (children) can see big changes. They can see them (seeds) growing fast."

But not all seeds can be taken from the package

and planted immediately in the garden. Some have to be started in seed boxes and then get transferred to the garden. (The back of the package will tell people which seeds need which method).

A minimum of six of each plant should be planted to make sure at least some will survive, said Moncada.

Preventative maintenance can save money

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure when it comes to keeping your home healthy.

Your doctor would probably tell you it is a good idea to get a quick check-up before engaging in strenuous summer activities and the same common sense applies to your home. Here is a check list that can help.

✓ Clean out your gutters and down-spouts. Seal any leaky joints and make sure that rain water is directed well away from the foundation.

✓ Storms can be tough on roofs. Check the flashing around your chimney and roof vents and look for broken or missing shingles.

✓ Leaky windows and door seals can waste a lot of the money you spend on air conditioning. Replace missing or damaged caulk and weather-stripping.

✓ Any cracks in your home's foundation and exterior facing should be repaired as soon as possible.

✓ Decks and porches need special attention. Clean out debris between the boards and above the joists. Replace warped or splitting wood and re-seal, re-stain or re-paint the deck before

(Please see page 10)

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