

The GrapeVine

April 2019

Get Digging! Gardening With Kids



The cold weather is behind us and spring is almost in full swing. April is National Gardening month. What better way to kick-start the spring season than spending time outside gardening with your children? Gardening can be a fun and enriching activity that can benefit kids in the following ways:

- **Planting can motivate children to eat more fruits and vegetables.** Understanding how food is grown stimulates curiosity and increases a child's willingness to try new food. Kids (and adults!) will be excited to eat what they have grown, which supports a positive association with eating healthy foods.
- **The experience of planting seeds and watching them grow reinforces positive self-esteem.** Kids gain a sense of responsibility and achievement by tending to plants. They feel accomplished and confident about seeing their hard work literally come to life.
- **Gardening can help advance cognitive abilities.** Tasks involved in growing plants can improve memory and help build sensory and motor skills. Working as a team also supports positive social skills.
- **Gardening Increases daily physical activity.** The process of gardening is very physical and involves many calorie-burning and muscle-building activities such as digging, lifting, weeding and raking, etc.

Start A Healthy Gossip

It's easy to get children thinking about good nutrition and healthy choices. The questions below will help start a conversation that will spark interest with children about gardening.

- Can you name one fruit and one vegetable that you would like to grow?
- Has anyone ever grown their own fruits and/or vegetables—if yes; what do they look like, how do they grow?

Upcoming Events

Agency Food Safety

Friday, May 10th

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm

Island Harvest Food Bank
40 Marcus Blvd., Hauppauge

Thursday, May 23rd

1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

St. Christopher's
11 Gale Ave., Baldwin



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www.islandharvest.org

From The Garden to the Classroom: is a curriculum developed by the University of California Cooperative Extension for Early Childhood age children. It incorporates both indoor and outdoor activities that teach children about healthy eating and planting skills. The lessons combine didactic nutrition education with experiential learning to give children a well-rounded gardening experience.

https://cns.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk416/files/inline-files/9-garden_section.pdf



Growing Minds-Farm to School: This site provides 23 different lesson plans that were created for students to learn about various aspects of gardening through related literature, creative expression, and hands-on experience.

<https://growing-minds.org/garden-lesson-plans/>

Spring Strawberry-Red Pepper Spinach Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- ½ small red onion, chopped
- ½ red pepper, cut in thin strips (julienned)
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 4 cups spinach greens
- 2 small cucumbers, chopped
- 2 ½ cups strawberries, sliced

Directions:

1. Rinse/clean all produce; pat dry spinach
2. In a large bowl, mix cucumbers, peppers and spinach greens together
3. To create dressing: In a small bowl, whisk red onion, olive oil, and red wine vinegar.
4. Pour dressing over salad mixture and toss. Add strawberries. Serve fresh.

