

Herb Gardening for Kids

If you want your kids to have a superb educational experience, herb gardening may be a great choice--not only does it teach kids a lot, but herbs are often quite easy to grow. They are low-maintenance and usually survive in spite of minor abuse or neglect. Many children find themselves fascinated with nature. Children love to learn and to explore ideas, especially ones related to nature--and they'll do that and enjoy themselves in the process if they take up gardening. It can be very exciting for them to know that what they're growing can be eaten later! There is so much your children can learn from herb gardening--starting with all the kinds of herbs that are available to them. If they don't know already, you can teach them what these herbs look like when they're fresh, what their scent is like, as well as the various uses for each herb. Of course, you shouldn't overwhelm your children. You should probably start them off with quite small herb gardens. Between three and five plants would be plenty to get them on the path to good gardening. You want this to be an enjoyable learning experience, not another chore that they resent having to do. A great option for kids is starting what's called a "pizza garden." A lot of herbs are commonly used in pizzas and you can help your child to grow some of these. Most children love pizza, so not only will they enjoy knowing all of what goes into it, but they ought to more readily care about the plants and relate to them. Your typical pizza garden includes basil, oregano, and perhaps parsley and thyme. You also may include things that usually go in pizza sauces, like roma tomatoes or garlic. And if you want to expand the garden as the child becomes able or if you want to join in, then peppers and onions and other pizza toppings can be added, as well. Kids may also have fun growing herbs for their scent. There are many types of great herbs which have their own distinctive smells--and you can easily include flowers in this sort of garden. As an example, you can find geraniums which smell like apricot, lime, orange, and strawberry! Children also often have a lot of fun with kinds of mint--and chewing on leaves of plants like spearmint can be tasty, too! But if you let them do this, make sure they know to ask you before eating any plant. Herb gardening can also help you teach your children about the differences between kinds of the same sort of plant. Planting several varieties of basil, for example, can show your kids that there may be many kinds of the same plant or animal. Lemon basil, globe basil, purple basil, and Thai basil could easily be planted to teach your children the differences and similarities of each--that way, they'll come to understand that things can be both similar and different. You can also use herb gardening to teach your children how to be responsible. Either they'll learn about taking care of something on a regular basis, or they'll learn that there are consequences to their actions (or lack thereof). As the plants begin to wither away and die, they'll realize how important maintaining their duties is. But maybe most importantly, an herb garden can give your child something they can be proud of. When they grow something successfully and you can use it in a meal, they'll get a great boost to their self-esteem--and they'll enjoy learning about it all!

About the Author

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