

Experiential Activities Grades K-2





A Child's Indoor Garden!

During winter, you and your children can grow veggies! And for kids, an indoor garden can be much easier to handle than an outside garden!

Root-top Garden

Explain to the children that roots are a very important part of plants that help to anchor a plant in the soil and take up the water and nutrients needed for a plant to grow. Roots come in lots of shapes and sizes. Can you think of any roots that we eat? How about carrots, or radishes, or beets?

Materials:

- Shallow dish or pie plate
- Root veggies such as carrots, turnips, radishes, or beets
- Stones or pebbles
- Water

A root-top garden is an easy way to start children on their first indoor gardening project!

1. Cut off the tops of root vegetables such as carrots, turnips, radishes or beets.
2. On the piece you just cut off, remove all of the leaves that are on the stems, and cut the stems down to about half an inch.
3. Then, put the stems in a shallow dish or pie plate, with the cut bottoms down, and cover the bottom of the dish with water.
4. Put decorative stones or pebbles in the bottom of the dish to make it more attractive.
5. Place the dish on a windowsill where it will get plenty of sunlight.
6. Make sure you keep your root garden well-watered. Leaves will begin to sprout in about two to three weeks.

Adapted from: <http://pioneerthinking.com/indoor-gardening-for-kids> and http://www.fairchildgarden.org/portals/0/docs/education/downloadable_teaching_modules/school%20gardens/root%20top%20garden.pdf?ver=2015-10-16-094816-433



An Indoor Watercress Garden!

During winter, you and your children can grow nutritious greens for salads and sandwiches!

Explain to the children that watercress and mustard greens are super-healthy plants, full of many of the vitamins and minerals that your body needs. These greens are great used in salads or sandwiches.

Materials:

- Dinner plate
- Paper towels
- Watercress and/or mustard seeds
- Water

Instructions:

1. Place a paper towel on a dinner plate and soak it with water.
2. Tip the plate so that all excess water is poured off.
3. Then, sprinkle watercress (or mustard seeds) over half of the paper towel.
4. Cover the dish with another paper towel or another plate so that it is kept out of the light.
5. When three days has passed, add more seeds to the other half of the paper towel that is on the bottom of the dish.
6. Make sure that the paper towel stays moist, but is not saturated with water.
7. Re-cover the seeds for another few days.
8. When that seedlings are about half an inch high, leave uncovered and place on a windowsill where they will get plenty of sunlight.
9. Continue to keep the paper towels moist.
10. Watercress and the mustard are ready for harvest when they are about three inches high. These greens are great used in salads or sandwiches.



Frozen Food Aisle – Nutritious Veggies and Fruits During Winter!

Some information to share with the children...

And, a possible Field Trip!!

There are many nutritious fruits and vegetables in the frozen section of your grocery store! Share some of the information below with your children, ask them questions about their experiences shopping with their parents and grandparents in the frozen food aisle. If you are able, consider taking them on a **field trip** to the grocery store as part of your site's activities!

Is "fresh" healthier than frozen?

Which do you think is healthier: fresh or frozen? The answer is **BOTH** are healthy!



Flash Freezing!!

Doesn't *flash freezing* sound exciting?!! It sure was to an American inventor named Clarence Frank Birdseye II, who invented the process of *flash freezing*. Flash freezing of fruits, vegetables, meats, and seafood preserve flavor, quality, and nutrients. Birdseye discovered the key was freezing the food quickly, *locking in foods nutritional value*. Flash freezing forms small ice crystals which prevent the cell walls from bursting, thus preserving nutrients!

Have you heard of "Birdseye Frozen Vegetables?" Mr. Birdseye started that company. Look for the many brands of vegetables and fruits in the frozen section of your grocery store – store brands usually save you money and taste just as great!

Fruit on the Frozen Aisle

Just like with all foods, check your ingredient list. Make sure it is **just** the fruit itself. Avoid added sugar.



Tip: Skip the syrup for topping your waffles or pancakes. Try using frozen fruit! Simply add frozen berries to a small pot over stove top and let simmer. It will turn gooey and syrupy and yummy, without a lot of extra sugar!

- ✓ **What fruits can you name in the frozen aisle? Which have you tried? Make a list and put check marks next to the ones you have tried, and put stars next to those you will try!**
- ✓ **What colors are the fruits you see? (remind them that color=good healthy food!)**

Vegetables on the Frozen Aisle

Go for the plain varieties, and think about adding healthy oils and herbs you dried from your summer garden, or are growing in your indoor winter garden! Skip the vegetables with gravies, cheese sauces, and even those labeled as "lightly seasoned." Check the nutrition label for sodium and fat. Watch out for "par-fried" items, such as frozen french fries. "Par-fried" means blanching or half-frying, that involves partially frying the food, but not browning it, so that it must be cooked again before serving. So even though you might bake them in the oven, *they were still fried!* Try veggie fries or cauliflower tots as an alternative to regular potato french fries!



- ✓ **What vegetables can you name in the frozen aisle? Which have you tried? Make a list and put check marks next to the ones you have tried, and put stars next to those you will try!**
- ✓ **How many different kinds of vegetables can you count?**
- ✓ **What colors are the vegetables you see? (remind them that color=good healthy food!)**



Grow Citrus Trees!

Have you ever thought about growing your own citrus trees? Try out this experiment with your children this winter!

Remind your children that they should eat the whole fruit, more often than drinking juice, of super nutritious citrus fruits!!

The whole fruit provides more fiber, and lots of vitamins A and C – so grab an orange or tangelo or grapefruit and throw it in your pack for a quick snack!

Materials:

- Seeds, which are called pips, from oranges, limes, lemons or grapefruit
- Small pots
- Potting soil

Instructions:

1. Remove the seeds, which are called pips, from oranges, limes, lemons or grapefruit.
2. Fill small pots with potting soil.
3. Put two or three pips just beneath the surface of the soil in each pot.
4. Remember, if you are planting more than one type of citrus seed, put small labels on each flower pot so that you can tell which kind of plant they are!
5. When you see the first shoots appear, place the pots in a sunny area such as a windowsill.
6. After the plants have grown two pairs of leaves, carefully transfer each one to its own pot. It will take several months before you see the leaves transforming themselves into small citrus trees.

Adapted from: <http://pioneerthinking.com/indoor-gardening-for-kids>



Veggie Christmas Trees!

Have some fun with veggies as you think about the holiday season!

Materials:

- Green beans
- Corn, peas, pieces of peppers, and other small veggies for decorations
- Heart of palm or other veggie for the trunk
- Paper plates

Instructions:

Using the picture below as a model, design your own veggie trees on plates, then enjoy (yes you can eat the tree!)



Adapted from: b-InspiredMama.com