

Seed Starting

Participants plant seeds and learn about best practices for seed starting.

Materials & Tools Required:

1. Variety of seed packets (larger seeds such as nasturtiums, sunflowers, beans or peas are easier to handle and plant than small seeds such as lettuces or pansies. Seed dials or tweezers can be useful tools for planting small seeds).
2. Seed starting mix ([make your own](#)* or purchase in advance)
3. Small seed starting pots or containers (consider using recycled containers such as Keurig coffee pods or takeout dip containers, or make your own [compostable planter pots](#)).
4. Trowels or spoons (for scooping soil)
5. Labels (you can buy these, use popsicle sticks or make your own using sour cream/yogurt containers)
6. Watering can (if watering during session)
7. Gardening gloves (optional)



Instructions:

1. Choosing seeds: Show the participants what seeds are available and let them choose which ones they want. Have a discussion with the participants about the different information that you can find on the seed pack using our [How to Read a Seed Packet activity](#).
2. After participants choose their seeds, they can divide the seeds into ones to be planted inside and the ones that can be directly sown outside in the garden (such as carrots, beets, and other root vegetables).
3. Planting seeds: Demonstrate how to fill the pots with the seed starting mix, plant the seeds, and water after. It is important to label the seedlings with the plant name as well as information you may require such as the date or who it was planted by. Remind participants to follow the instructions on the seed packet, as instructions for different plants vary. While participants are working with the seeds and seed starting mix, ask them to take note of the texture of the soil, the size, color, and texture of the seeds, pots, etc. Ask participants questions about sensations they're experiencing during this activity such as does the texture of the soil remind you of anything else? What does the smell of soil make you think of? You may also want to refer to the Seed-Themed Reflection questions in the database.

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4. Seedling Care: Depending on where you are delivering this activity, staff may be responsible for the seedling care rather than the participants. Giving participants this information is valuable regardless. Share the information from our [Seed Starting Best Practices](#) document with participants to explain lighting requirements, watering, and other important care instructions.

Adjectives Scavenger Hunt

Participants explore the garden through a unique lens of finding plants that match with different adjectives.

Materials & Tools Required:

1. Garden area to explore
2. [Adjectives Scavenger Hunt \(Black and White Printer-Friendly Version\)](#) or [Adjectives Scavenger Hunt \(Color Version\)](#)
3. Pens or pencils
4. Clipboards



Instructions:

1. Introduce the activity and ask participants if they know what an adjective is and if they can list some examples. An adjective is a word that modifies or describes a noun or pronoun, providing additional information about its qualities, characteristics, or attributes, such as shiny, colorful or stinky.
2. Present the [Adjectives scavenger hunt](#) activity sheets to participants (on a clipboard, with a pen or pencil).
3. Explain to participants that this scavenger hunt is less about collecting things and more about engaging their senses and looking at the garden through a different lens. Provide some examples, such as for hollow – bamboo, for twisting – pea tendrils or for velvety – lamb's ear. Remind participants that it is okay if they cannot find a plant for each adjective.
4. Depending on your objectives for this activity, you may want to put participants in pairs or small groups to promote teamwork and social interaction, or use it as an independent activity to encourage mindfulness and reflection.
5. You may or may not want to encourage participants to document their experiences using a cell phone camera.
6. Instruct participants to be respectful of the outdoor space and not to harvest or remove anything without permission.
7. Clearly communicate the rules and guidelines to all participants, including start and end times, boundaries, and any site-specific safety precautions.
8. Once participants complete the activity, come back together as a group and ask participants to reflect on what element they connected with the most.
9. This scavenger hunt can also be used by garden visitors as a self-guided activity when they visit the garden.

Planting a Lemon Tree

Participants plant lemon seeds from a grocery store lemon.

Materials & Tools Required:

1. Fresh lemons with seeds
2. Potting soil
3. Small pots (approximately 2 inch pots) or containers (such as takeout dip containers or coffee pods)
4. Watering can or spray bottle
5. Optional: Plastic wrap or a plastic bag



Instructions:

1. Provide a Sample: Lemon trees make attractive houseplants with their glossy leaves and scented blossoms. If possible, bring in a lemon tree plant that you have already started to pass around for participants to engage with. Alternatively, you could show photos of the plant throughout its life cycle.
2. Select a Lemon: Choose a fresh, ripe lemon. Make sure that it is not a seedless lemon! On average, lemons may have approximately 10-20 seeds inside. Keep in mind that the resulting tree may not produce fruits identical to the parent lemon.
3. Extract Seeds: Remove seeds from the lemon. Rinse them thoroughly to remove any residual pulp or juice. Since you will just be using the seeds for this activity, the lemon and/or juice can be set aside and used for another activity, such as [fruit salad](#) or lavender lemonade. This can be a great time to manage expectations and explain that it can take many years for actual fruit to grow on the plant, especially if indoors.
4. Planting: Use a well-draining potting mix and fill pots or containers. Plant the lemon seeds about half an inch to an inch deep in the soil. You may want to encourage participants to plant multiple seeds in case some do not germinate. Explain to participants that the seeds may take a few weeks to sprout.
5. Watering: Depending on your setting and context, participants may wish to water their plants during the session or when they get home. To water, moisten the soil with a spray bottle or watering can. Be sure to not oversaturate it or have it sitting in water for prolonged periods of time.
6. Explain Short and Long-term Care Instructions:
 - a. Covering the Pot (optional): Cover the pot with plastic wrap or place it inside a plastic bag to create a humid environment. This helps retain moisture during the germination process and can be removed once the seed(s) sprout.
 - b. Location: Place the pot or container in a warm location where they will receive plenty of indirect sunlight.

- c. Transplanting: When the seedlings have grown large enough to handle, you can transplant them into larger containers.
- d. Fertilizing: Consider fertilizing with a fertilizer specific to citrus trees to promote health and growth.

Patience: Be patient, as it may take several weeks for the seeds to germinate and several years for the tree to reach maturity and potentially produce fruit.

Related activities:

- [Fruit-Themed Opening or Closing Round](#)
- [Fruits from Around the World](#)
- [Fruits Mindfulness](#)
- [Fruit Salad](#)

Chive Blossom Vinegar

Participants harvest fresh chive blossoms and infuse them in vinegar.

Materials & Tools Required:

1. Paper bag or container (for harvesting chive blossoms)
2. Scissors or pruners (optional: for harvesting chive blossoms)
3. Measuring cups
4. Vinegar (such as white, apple cider or rice vinegar etc.)
5. Chive blossoms
6. Clean mason jars with lids
7. Access to a refrigerator



Instructions:

1. Harvest chive blossoms by either popping them off with your hands or using scissors/pruners. Look for blossoms that are fully open and vibrant in color. It is best to harvest chive blossoms when they are fully open and blooming (not wilted and past their prime). Be sure to leave some blossoms as the bees love them too!
2. Depending on your context and participants, you may offer participants a chance to taste a blossom or a piece of one. Be warned that they pack a very strong onion taste!
3. Once the chive blossoms are harvested, wash them, place them in a clean mason jar and cover them in vinegar. I usually use white vinegar because it is affordable, but other vinegars, such as apple cider vinegar or white wine vinegar, work as well.
4. Place the lid on the jar and put it in the fridge for two to three days to let the flavors and colors of the chive flowers into the vinegar.
5. Strain the flowers from the vinegar. The finished product is the most beautiful pink infused vinegar! When ready, mix it with olive oil and enjoy it on a [garden fresh salad](#).

Notes/Suggestions:

Refer to the [Best Practices for Facilitating Culinary TH Activities](#) document.

Related activities:

- [Garden Salad Recipe](#)
- [Allium Guessing Game](#)

Microgreens

Broadcasting seeds in small trays or pots to be grown as microgreens.

Materials & Tools Required:

1. Potting soil
2. Seed trays (with drainage holes) or shallow pots
3. Additional seed trays or saucers (to place the seed trays or pots on to allow for bottom watering [see below]).
4. Seeds (sunflower, pea and radish seeds are great seeds for microgreens)
5. Water
6. Gloves (optional)



Instructions:

1. Begin the session by asking participants if they have ever heard of or tasted microgreens before.
2. Explain that microgreens are seeds that are planted densely and harvested for consumption while they are still seedlings. They are:
 - a. Packed with nutrients and a lot of flavor
 - b. Usually ready to be harvested within 2 weeks
 - c. A great topping on dishes such as salads, eggs or pizzas or as an addition to juices and smoothies
 - d. Able to be grown indoors (ie on your countertops) with natural or artificial lighting
3. Demonstrate filling up a seed tray or pot (and make sure all containers have drainage holes). Fill the container to the top with potting soil and wet the soil. As you prepare to show how to sow the seeds, ask participants if they have heard of "broadcasting" seeds before? Ask them to think about what "broadcasting" means in terms of media? Broadcasting seeds refers to dispersing seeds all over the surface of the soil. Rather than planting each seed one by one as you usually would when seed starting, with broadcasting, we are trying to almost cover the entire surface of the soil with seeds.
4. After your demonstration, begin distributing the supplies for participants to plant their own microgreens.
5. Explain that the seed trays or pots can be taken home and the microgreens should be ready to eat within about 2 weeks. Explain care instructions:
 - a. Do not water the top of the soil, as this can promote overwatering and mold. Water from the bottom (ie: put another tray below the tray of microgreens and water in that extra tray). Microgreen seed trays need to be wet to germinate.
 - b. Place your microgreens in a spot that gets about 12-16 hours of light per day. If you do not have an ideal spot, you can use artificial growing lights.



Root in
Nature

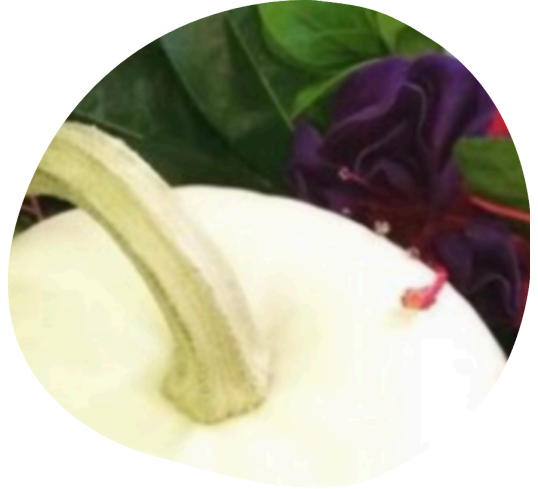
- c. Harvest the microgreens about 2 weeks after planting or once they are about 2 inches tall and have their first “true leaves.” To harvest, cut microgreens at the base of the sprout using clean scissors. Wash the microgreens before consuming.
- d. Once you have harvested all of the microgreens, compost the soil and start over again! Microgreens will not regrow as the energy from the seeds and soil will be depleted.

Table Wreaths

Participants create a simple seasonal centerpiece without having to wire on materials.

Materials & Tools Required:

1. Scissors and pruners
2. Metal wreath rings (variety of sizes available and will depend on how big you want the wreath to be)
3. Assorted greenery – will depend on your area, but some options are salal, tree branches (fir, hemlock, pine), boxwood, rosemary and eucalyptus
4. Decorations such as pinecones, ribbon, seasonal accents or flowers (dried such as statice or strawflowers, or sturdy flowers such as chrysanthemums or yarrow)
5. Large trays to build the table wreaths on (if they need to be moved and cannot be left on the table they are made on)



**When selecting the fresh materials to use for the wreath, keep in mind that they will not be in water (though you can mist it). Flowers are beautiful decorations for a table wreath, but most will not last long without water. This can be important to remind participants in order to manage expectations. Dried flowers are a nice option.*

Instructions:

This can be a simpler alternative to traditional wreaths where materials need to be fastened and wired on in order to be displayed on a wall or door. With table wreaths, the wreath is built where it will be placed (or on top of a tray that can be moved) and materials can just be placed in or around the wreath wring and decorations can be simply placed on top.

1. With this type of activity, it is always helpful to have a sample prepared in advance.
2. Depending on your group and setting, you may harvest the materials for the wreaths with participants or harvest them yourself beforehand and have them prepared on tables or in vases/containers.
3. If the table wreaths will not be staying on the table they are built on, put it on a large tray so that you can move it around easily.
4. Explain what a table wreath is (using the information above) and demonstrate how to place materials on and in the wreath ring. Materials can be pushed into the wreath ring, or if the materials have longer stems, can be woven through the ring. There really is no wrong way to do this!

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5. Add the "base" first – some larger, strong pieces of greenery and then add in more delicate stems, flowers or decorations after.
6. Table wreaths make a wonderful centerpiece, conversation starter and way to celebrate the seasons and bring nature inside.
7. To help your table wreath last for as long as possible:
 - a. Use dried flowers or materials.
 - b. Keep it away from any heat sources and direct sunlight.
 - c. Mist it lightly with a spray bottle (if using fresh materials).
 - d. Remove drying or dying greenery from the wreath as they start to look unsightly.
8. Once plant materials from the table wreath are dead or the season/ holiday has come to an end, you can remove the materials from the wreath ring and make a new table wreath!

Notes/Suggestions:

When selecting plant materials, always ensure that you have properly identified and know any potential risks of interacting with that plant (e.g., some plants may cause skin irritation or injury to the skin when touched).

Plant of the Day or Show and Tell

Participants explore a multi-sensory plant sample through sensory engagement and information shared by the facilitator.

Materials & Tools Required:

1. Plant of the day sample:
 - a. Try to select a multi-sensory plant (or seed or fruit of the plant) of seasonal interest, such as lavender in summer, lilacs in spring, pumpkins in fall or hellebore in winter.
 - b. Only use plants that are safe for your participants/setting and consult various sources to research them.



Instructions:

2. Present a sample of the plant of the day to the group. Depending on the plant and your group, you may want to have participants guess what the plant is or you may decide to share the name of the plant and some information right away.
3. Demonstrate how participants can engage their senses with the plant, such as by rubbing the leaves or smelling the flowers.
4. Clearly explain which senses are safe to use with the plant (e.g., if a plant is toxic, explain this and ensure that you have assessed the risk of using toxic plants in your setting).

Encourage participants to:

- a. Touch: Feel the texture of the leaves or petals (e.g., "Feel how soft and fuzzy lamb's ear is").
 - b. Smell: Rub the leaves or flowers to release the scent and inhale (e.g., "Rub the pineapple sage leaves and smell the tropical aroma").
 - c. Look: Observe the colors, shapes, and details (e.g., "Notice the vibrant contrasting colors of the coleus").
 - d. Listen (if applicable): Listen to the sound the plant makes when rubbed together or moved (e.g., "Gently shake the dry leaves and listen to the rustling sound").
 - e. Taste (where appropriate and safe): Taste a small piece of the plant (e.g., "Chew a small piece of basil leaf and notice the flavor").
5. Share information about the plant of the day, such as:
 - a. Its Latin name
 - b. Its traditional, medicinal, or edible uses (where applicable)
 - c. Its native habitat and preferred growing conditions
 - d. Interesting historical or cultural facts

- e. Its role in the ecosystem (e.g., attracts pollinators or provides habitat for wildlife)
 - f. Its blooming season (where applicable)
6. If time permits, promote further discussion about the plant of the day by asking questions such as:
- a. Have you heard of this plant before?
 - b. Have you grown this plant before? Would you like to grow this plant?
 - c. Have you eaten this plant before (if applicable)?
 - d. What did you think about the plant of the day?
7. If possible, proceed with an activity that involves the plant of the day. Check out the Activity Database for activities that may relate!

Notes/Suggestions:

- 1. Implement control measures and provide personal protective equipment as needed (e.g., open-aired spaces for scented plants or gloves for participants with sensitive skin).
- 2. To do this activity virtually, present a plant on the screen using a photo or video. Sensory engagement will be limited but this can still be an engaging and educational activity.

Collect a Rainbow

Participants mindfully collect natural materials that are the colors of the rainbow, connecting them with the environment.

Materials & Tools Required:

1. [Collect a rainbow template](#)
2. Natural materials or a garden area with natural materials available

Instructions:

1. Ask the participants to take a walk on the land and collect different colored flowers and leaves that can complete a rainbow. If it is challenging for each participant to find a separate item for all seven colors, ask each one participant to find one of the colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet).
2. Using a pre-drawn flower with seven petals, one for each color of the rainbow, ask the participants to place in each petal the natural elements that they found and ask them to describe what feelings or thoughts come to them when observing the colors.
3. Explain how the colors and textures are incorporated into the landscape to improve the mood and wellbeing.
4. Optional Reflection Question: What role does color play in nature? For example: camouflage, hummingbirds liking red etc.



Related activities:

- [Color and Emotion Discussion](#)
- [Color in the Garden Trivia](#)

Growing Garlic

Participants learn about the life cycle of garlic while planting garlic cloves.

Materials & Tools Required:

1. Garlic bulbs (that will grow in your climate)
2. Trowels or bulb planters
3. Place to plant the garlic in (pots or garden bed)

Instructions:

1. Begin the workshop by passing around a garlic bulb and explaining the difference between a garlic bulb and clove. Explain that each garlic clove you plant will (hopefully) grow a whole garlic bulb during its growing period. Show participants where the roots will grow (from the bottom) and where the plant will grow a green stem (from the top).
2. Follow the instructions in [Katie's garlic guide](#)*. Demonstrate how to plant the garlic using these instructions. Be sure to show participants how to use a trowel or the length of their hand to measure how deep and far apart the garlic should be planted (approximately four to six inches deep and apart).
3. After planting the garlic, explain care instructions and a timeline for when to harvest the garlic scapes and actual garlic bulb. This can be a great time to reflect on how many things in life that are worthwhile take time and require patience.
4. Consider mulching the garden bed as part of this session or at a future one.



Notes/Suggestions:

*Please note that this guide was created for gardeners in the Pacific Northwest of Canada.

Herb Posies

Participants create simple sensory arrangements of various herbs.

Materials & Tools Required:

1. A variety of multi-sensory fresh herbs
 - a. Examples include rosemary, pineapple sage, lemon verbena, thyme, mint, basil, lavender, dill and scented geraniums.
 - b. Try to select plants that engage a variety of different senses (e.g., do not only focus on strongly scented herbs).
 - c. Consider the size of the posies you are creating when selecting herb materials (e.g., for larger posies, choose plants with longer stems such as mint and rosemary and for smaller posies, choose plants such as thyme, basil and lavender).
 - d. Flowering herbs are also wonderful for posies as they add additional visual interest.
2. Scissors and/or pruners (depending on how woody or soft the stems of the chosen herbs are)
3. An elastic, piece of twine, ribbon, or string
 - a. Consider using culinary grade twine if the posy may be used in culinary applications later on.
4. Buckets of water (optional, to keep herbs fresh while you work)
5. Trays (optional, to display herbs on once harvested)
6. Small piece of damp paper towel (optional, for keeping stems hydrated if participants are transporting their posies home)



Instructions:

1. Introduce the activity by presenting a sample posy that you created in advance and by sharing some information about posies. Ask participants if they have heard of posies before and share some information, such as:
 - a. A herb posy is a small bouquet of fresh herbs, typically tied together and used for decorative, culinary or symbolic purposes.
 - b. Herb posies have a long history dating back to medieval times when people carried them to ward off illness and mask unpleasant odors.
 - c. In Victorian times, herb posies were often used to convey specific meanings through the herbs included. For example, rosemary symbolized remembrance, lavender represented devotion, and thyme signified courage. If you would like to use this idea



to frame the activity, you can check out this list of [Common Herbs and their Symbolic Meanings](#) that we have put together and have it printed out for participants to explore.

- d. Herb posies also make lovely gifts and are a nice way to share the bounty of the garden with others.
2. Choose a variety of herbs that you enjoy the scent of and that have therapeutic properties. Remember that herbs with woody stems (e.g., rosemary and thyme) will hold up better than softer stemmed herbs (e.g., basil and cilantro). This does not mean that you should not use softer stemmed herbs and is just a consideration.
3. Depending on your group, setting and context, you may wish to harvest the herbs in advance and have them on tables in buckets of water or trays. If possible and safe to do so, you may also opt to have participants harvest their own materials from the garden.
4. Explain to the participants that there really is no right or wrong way of doing this, but a helpful tip can be to start with a central herb, such as a sprig of rosemary or lavender. From there, gradually add more herbs around the central sprig, creating a small "bouquet". Participants may want to alternate the types of herbs to mix textures and scents and place the most visually appealing ones on the outside. Refer to the [Flower Arranging](#) activity for more tips and tricks (such as removing any lower leaves that will be submerged in water).
5. To tie the posy, hold the stems together and wrap an elastic or piece of twine, ribbon, or string around the base of the herbs where the lower leaves have been removed. Tie securely, but not so tight that it crushes the stems. Make a bow or knot to finish it off.
6. Once tied, trim the stems again if needed (for uniformity) to ensure they are even and at a length you like. Remember to cut stems on an angle to maximize the surface area for the plant to take up water.
7. If participants will be transporting their posies home, you can wrap the bottom of the stems in a damp paper towel. You may want to consider drying the posies at a later point and can refer to the [Drying Herbs](#) activity).