



GARDEN MANUAL

A collaborative preschool children's gardening program of
Greenwich Community Gardens & Greenwich Garden Club



GARDEN MANUAL

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Greenwich Garden Club

THIS MANUAL HAS BEEN LOVINGLY COMPILED BY

Urling Searle, Greenwich Garden Club and Patty Sechi, Founder, Greenwich Community Gardens, and edited by Emily Overlook Curry, Greenwich Community Gardens. ©2018



How to Use this Manual

This manual is designed to give volunteers of the Young Sprouts Garden Program in Greenwich CT a comprehensive guide to successfully manage a full season of gardening with 3-5 year old Head Start Program children. We encourage others to use it as a tool to help start their own garden and enjoy time with young children while teaching them the joys of growing their own fresh food.

Whether you are part of the Young Sprouts program or you are thinking of starting your own program for preschoolers, we encourage you to express your own delight in being outdoors in the garden, as your enthusiasm will be infectious with little ones. Every year we continue to learn from experience what works best with our preschoolers, and we also grow—organically! Developing a program at a sustainable pace is important and each year offers a fresh start. Young children take to gardening with remarkable ease, so remember to relax and enjoy yourself and they will too.

On the following pages you will find descriptions of the garden that inspired the making of this manual. It began as a small plot in a community garden with a group of gardeners and teachers experimenting and learning together. We’ve built structures, planned activities and mostly enjoyed sharing our passion for growing with these enthusiastic young ones. You may follow our calendar and descriptions of typical days or develop your own!

In this manual you will find curriculum ideas, kid-tested resources, book ideas and suggested supplies and materials you may need. There are also coloring and activity sheets that can be copied to have on hand for “foul weather” days or to give to teachers to reinforce garden learning in the classroom.

With a little planning and a devoted volunteer base you can be successful! Please feel free to reach out to Greenwich Community Gardens or Greenwich Garden Club at any time. We are here to encourage and guide you.

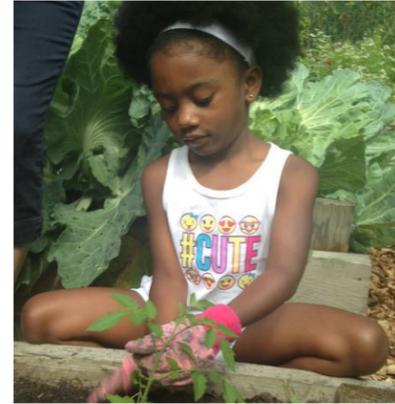
Enjoy!

Sincerely,

Patty Sechi, *Founder*
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Our Purpose

The Young Sprouts Garden Club was started in 2012 by a group of Greenwich Community Garden and Greenwich Garden Club gardeners, who organize weekly gardening experiences for the pre-school children who attend the local Head Start program. Once a week, 2 of the 4 classrooms of children attend the gardening program, so that each classroom visits the garden at least twice a month. Our outdoor program begins in May and runs through mid-August. Early spring classroom plantings and fall harvest celebrations are also planned. Most visits occur on Monday mornings and each class spends 30 to 45 minutes at the garden. Teachers are encouraged to bring the children out to the garden for additional visits during the week.

We have found that four volunteers who are prepared to teach gardening is an ideal number, so that we can give each child the attention he or she deserves. At least one teacher from each class accompanies the children and we always encourage them to get involved.

Our Program Goals

Children in outdoor learning settings have shown increases in self esteem, problem-solving and motivation to learn. Studies indicate that young gardeners develop a preference for the foods that they have grown themselves, and therefore they are likely to consume more fruits and vegetables as they grow older too.

Our program is designed to expose pre-school children to the joys of growing and eating fresh vegetables and herbs in a comfortable outdoor setting. The children are encouraged to observe, discover, experiment and learn in our nurturing garden environment. Parental involvement is encouraged too, so that what the children learn in the garden can also be practiced at home.

The garden is an ideal place to model good recycling habits for the children. We reuse natural and recycled materials like yogurt containers, toilet paper rolls, egg cartons, garden markers, plastic deli trays and salad containers whenever we can. We prefer that teachers and volunteers refrain from bringing plastic water bottles, plastic bags or other one-time use products into the garden.

The Children's Gardens

CREATING A CHILDREN'S GARDEN can be as simple as utilizing a few planters filled with herbs, lettuce and cherry tomatoes or building a few small raised beds. If you are starting a new garden, we encourage you to work within your budget, start simple and build on your success. The Young Sprouts Garden has developed and grown since it began in 2012.

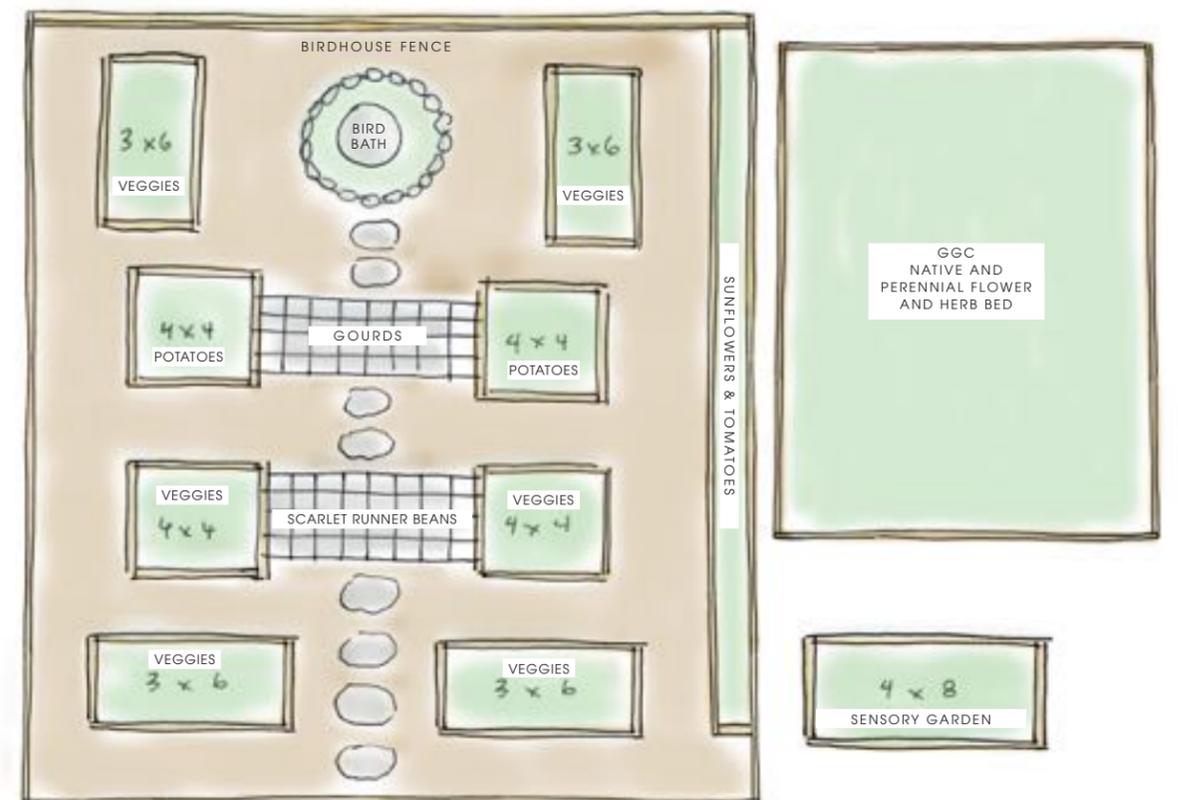
The majority of our childrens' garden beds contain vegetables, as well as herbs and flowers, which are very popular with this age group for their colors, shapes, textures and scents and for the insects and pollinators they attract. Our garden consists of:

- 9 raised vegetable & flower garden beds
- 1 long trough beds for sunflowers, marigolds, nasturtiums
- A bird bath flower bed
- A sensory garden bed filled with herbs
- Birdhouse fence
- Sheltered pergola area for reading & activities



An ideal size for small childrens' garden beds is 3'x6' as this allows for their maximum reach and many children can work around the perimeter together if there is enough space between the beds. We inherited the four 4'x4' beds shown in the drawing below. The centers of these beds are difficult for the children to reach so we grow climbing plants on small trellises in the middle of each. Additionally, we have arches between these beds, where we grow Scarlet Runner beans, pole beans or gourds (see diagram). The children love to run under them!

The bird bath circle has become a destination and a nice spot for children to plant flowers and then peek into the birdhouses. The long sunflower and tomato planter on the right was built to utilize a long strip of formerly unused space. At 18" in depth it is ideal for a single row of sunflowers and cherry tomatoes.



A Typical Day in Our Garden

OUR GARDENING PROGRAM has been developed to enhance the curriculum at the Armstrong Court Head Start school. Four classes of approximately 10-18 children participate in bi-monthly garden visits. The teachers bring the children out to the garden on alternate weeks and stay for the duration of the visit. Four volunteers from our team are optimal to give the children plenty of attention and assistance. We make sure to take photos each week as we do not want to miss an opportunity to record priceless moments and measurable successes. This is a typical day in the garden:

9:00 am Our team of volunteers arrive at the garden to prepare for the day's activities. One volunteer checks in with the teachers to confirm when the children will be coming out to the garden.

9:30 - 10:45 The first class arrives at the garden. We greet the children and from the moment they enter the garden we reinforce simple garden rules - walk, don't run, take turns, share and have compassion for others.

We begin by observing the community garden and work our way down to the children's plots, the compost bins, the greenhouse and the rain barrel system. "What do we see today?" The children look around and talk about everything from a tree in the distance to a twig, spider, bird, new bud, vegetable, flower or the bright blue color of the rain barrels. This is a full sensory experience and we encourage exploration, except for touching plants that are not in their own garden beds.

If we have enough volunteers and the group is larger than 8-10, we divide into two smaller groups. One group might weed, compost, water or plant while the other group may sit together to enjoy a garden-related book, pass around herbs for everyone to smell or explore a worm bin or container of compost for bugs. Then the groups switch activities.

We typically finish each visit with either garden yoga or a garden dance coordinated with a book such as, "Up, Down and Around". The children figure out the words over time and enjoy showing us what they know.

We congratulate the children on a job well done, say goodbye and greet the next group as they arrive.

10:45 - 11:00 Volunteers put away any tools or props that are kept on site and make sure that garden beds are tidy and well watered. If time allows, we may discuss our plans for the coming week(s).



Garden Schedule

April - week 1 & 2 Indoor projects - seedlings, painting rocks, garden stories

April - week 3 & 4 Indoor projects - seedlings, seed observation & games

May - week 1 & 2 Tour garden, plant potatoes, carrots & lettuce. Water. Topic & book: SEEDS - talk about how seeds are planted by people, wind, animals, birds, etc. Bring different sized, shaped and colored seeds and let children examine them. Garden yoga or a dance.

May - week 3 & 4 Tour garden, plant more seeds and seedlings. Water, using water from hoses or from rain barrels. Topic & book: WORMS - bring worm bin, plant markers and magnifiers. Encourage exploration. Garden yoga or a dance.

June - week 1 & 2 Tour garden. Plant, water & weed. Topic & book: HERBS & POLLINATORS - Plant the herb bed with plants and let the children smell, touch, taste. Talk about pollinators and encourage everyone to be bees, butterflies, birds, etc. Give teachers pollinator coloring sheets for kids.

June - week 3 & 4 Tour garden. Water, weed, harvest. Topic & book: SOIL & COMPOST. Bring a container of composted soil, plant markers, magnifiers. Ask them what they can find in the soil. Bring small compost bin and compost components in separate containers and teach the kids how to build a compost pile. Show a sample of finished compost.

July - week 1 & 2 Tour garden & hunt for bugs and do ladybug release. Water, weed, harvest and bring weeds to the real compost bins. Volunteers can bring some items from home for the kids to compost. Topic & book: BUGS. Reinforce what we saw firsthand. Give teachers bug coloring sheets. Garden yoga or a dance.

July - week 3 & 4 Tour garden. Vegetable Scavenger hunt - bring picture cards and have the kids find the vegetables. Water, weed, harvest and bring weeds to the real compost bins. Have kids do vegetable coloring sheets or create their own artwork for garden art show.

August Garden Art Show
Vegetable Parade, Vegetable Banquet and Certificates

Suggested Activities & Curriculum Ideas

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Classroom Seed Planting

CHILDREN LOVE TO WATCH SEEDS SPROUT and we encourage you to plan classroom seed plantings for them to nurture and observe. This can be as simple as placing containers or trays on a window sill to creating a vertical grow light gutter garden (see below) or a shelf system with grow lights. The key is to find what works well with available classroom space.

INDOOR SEED PLANTING

WHAT YOU NEED:

- *Wheat grass, marigold, or whatever seeds you like*
- *Seed starting flat with seed starting mix (soiless is best)*
- *Heat source to heat from below - radiator or seedling heating mat*
- *A direct light window*
- *Small nozzle watering can*



GROW LIGHT SEED STARTING

WHAT YOU NEED:

- *Seed starting flat(s) and tray(s)*
- *Shelving unit or flat space where lights can be hung over flat(s)*
- *Grow light unit(s) or shop light fixture(s) with LED bulbs*
- *Power source*
- *Heat source from below - radiator or seedling heating mat*
- *Seeds*
- *Small nozzle watering can*



VERTICAL GUTTER GARDEN

THIS CAN BE A SPAN OF WALL where you hang a grow light from the ceiling or attach the grow light fixture to the underside of a board that is mounted to the wall. Add a row of gutters beneath. Another option is to build a free-standing gutter garden, such as the one shown in this photo. A gutter garden can be used for growing seeds to transplant to the garden or to grow greens and herbs throughout the season. Attach some lights to the top and you have a four-season indoor garden!

WHAT YOU NEED FOR FREE-STANDING GUTTER GARDEN:

- *10' of vinyl gutter & 5 sets of end caps*
- *(1) 2x4 board & (2) 2x2 boards with rigid tie connectors*
- *(40) 1 1/2" screws*
- *Rustoleum robins egg bluepaint*
- *Rope & (2) large s-hooks - 1/4" x 2" & (2) eye hooks - 1/4" x 3 1/4"*
- *Thompson's water seal*
- *Potting soil & herbs*
- *A cute sign!*



Outdoor Gardening



top crops

Besides the seedlings we grow indoors, we order free seeds from organic seed companies each year, and the *Greenhouse Growing Team* at the community garden gifts us seedlings too. Here are some easy-to-grow favorites:

- lettuces, several varieties*
- carrots, shorter varieties*
- radishes, cherry belle and french breakfast*
- green beans, scarlet runner beans*
- small sweet peppers*
- red cherry tomatoes, sungold cherry tomatoes*
- golden beets, bull's blood beets*
- potatoes, several varieties*
- sugar snap peas*
- sunflowers, various sizes and colors*
- marigolds, various sizes and colors*
- herbs for taste, smell and good looks!*

WEEDING AND WATERING

YOUNG SPROUTS LOVE TO WEED AND WATER! We divide the group in half if more than 8-10 children attend and switch activities. We help the weeders with their gloves, show them how to weed and what the weeds look like. They can also weed the area surrounding the beds. The children can collect the weeds in a trug or large bucket and transfer them to their compost bin.

Fill a trug or two with water and line up the watering cans. Keep the hose ready to refill the trugs as needed. Each child can fill a watering can and refill as desired. This keeps the fast-moving line of waterers moving and their faces smiling.



resource tips

Our preferred garden buckets are colorful, all-purpose TRUGS. Check out Tubtrugs at: redgorillausa.com, amazon.com or gardeners.com.

We make our own PLANT LABELS from old venetian blinds. They are free, easy to write on, and one blind will last you many years! (see photo on page 11)



PLANTING SEEDS

PLANTING SEEDS IN THE GARDEN is a favorite spring activity. The children are always excited to put on their garden gloves (*with or without assistance*) and dig in the dirt with their trowels.

We start the year of seed planting by reading a book about seeds. This gets the children excited about working in the garden. Seeds come in all shapes and sizes and planting seeds can be a fun hands-on show-and-tell activity for young sprouts.

Young children love to dig in the dirt so it is a good idea to give them a few minutes to play with their trowels before beginning to plant. Tiny seeds can be a challenge when the children are wearing their gloves, and planting evenly is a difficult skill to learn. Be ready to help if some of the seeds fall or are planted a bit heavily. That is just fine. Seedlings can always be thinned after they begin to grow.



WHAT YOU NEED:

- *Trowels (arranged on garden bench or in a bed)*
- *Garden gloves (set out in pairs)*
- *Small watering cans*
- *A stick to prep holes for planting*
- *Seeds (prepare by what to plant by season)*
- *Plant Labels (see resource tips, pg. 10)*
- *Trugs or 5 gallon buckets (see resource tips, pg. 10)*
- *Book on seed planting*

how we do it

1. Gather everyone for a book about seeds.
2. If group is larger than 8-10 divide into two groups. One group can visit the greenhouse or the compost bin while the other plants the seeds and then rotate.
3. Help the children put on their gloves - most children will need assistance at the beginning of the season.
4. Give each child a trowel and show them where to dig. Let the children play with their trowels for a few minutes and then ask them to smooth the soil out. You may want to demonstrate. Encourage them to keep the soil inside the bed.
5. Show the children the seed packet(s) and see if anyone can identify the vegetable(s) in the picture. Show them the seeds and hand each child 1-3 seeds depending on the size. Some will drop them right away and others will be very careful to hang onto them.
6. Depending on the size of the seeds you are planting, you can either indicate where to scatter the seeds or use your finger or a stick to make holes for the children to drop their seeds into. Try to follow the instructions on the seed packet.
7. Do not worry if seeds scatter a bit. If you are low on seeds, collect extra heavy seeding from the first class and have the second class replant them. The goal is for the children to enjoy the process. One or two children will remember exactly where they planted their seeds and will show you on their next visit.
8. Have the children water the seeds. After both groups finish planting and have left the garden, check the seed placement as best you can and be sure the watering was thorough.
9. Continue planting throughout the season. You will be amazed at how much their confidence and skills improve.

Composting

COMPOSTING IS A SIMPLE & REWARDING ACTIVITY, enjoyable for adults and children alike. If you learn the basics, you can show the children how much fun it is to create a beautiful, rich garden amendment.

Below is the basic compost recipe, and on the facing page, a breakdown of some of the things to gather and lay out on a table. When you teach the children, use a small demonstration bin or box. At the end of the lesson, the children contribute what they have collected to the garden compost bins. Try to involve the teachers by having the children save vegetable and fruit scraps from the classroom and have them bring what they collect to the garden to compost.

Project a sense of comfort and enjoyment with composting, and encourage the children to explore and ask questions. When young children have a positive experience they are less likely to develop a fear of the outdoors, particularly of “things that crawl and wiggle” (bugs) and getting “dirty” (soil).

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Sticks or wooden plant markers
- Garden gloves (set out in pairs)
- Children’s magnifiers (at least a dozen)
- Array of green and brown material set out on trays and in containers on a table
- Four samples: finished compost, unfinished compost, garden soil and potting soil
- Demo Box or mini-compost bin for teaching
- Watering can
- Book on compost, “Compost Stew: A to Z”



COMPOST RECIPE

One part “Greens”
(NITROGEN)
+
Two-three parts “Browns”
(CARBON)
+
Water & Oxygen (air)

GREENS

fresh, moist, nitrogen-rich

FROM THE GARDEN

- green plants
- garden trimmings
- fresh leaves & flowers

FROM HOME

- vegetable scraps
- fruit scraps
- coffee grounds
- tea bags
- blood meal
- houseplant trimmings
- grass clippings (moderation)



- NO!**
NEVER COMPOST
- anything treated with pesticides
 - diseased or pest-infested plants
 - invasive weeds, especially with seeds
 - poison ivy (native)
 - large branches
 - sand or construction debris
 - meat, fish, dairy products, fats
 - coal or charcoal ashes

BROWNS

dead, dry, carbon-rich

FROM THE GARDEN

- fall leaves
- small twigs
- woody prunings
- dry plant material
- straw
- compost
- soil



FROM HOME

- egg shells
- towel & toilet paper rolls
- paper egg cartons
- nut shells
- wood ash (in moderation)



how we do it

1. Prepare the compost materials in separate bins and trays and set them up on a table before the children come to the garden. Include bins of unfinished and finished compost, garden soil and potting soil for comparison.
2. If groups are larger than 8-10 children, divide into two groups as each child needs time and space to participate. Make sure to reserve enough materials for all the children who will be visiting that morning.
3. Talk to the children about compost and how it helps the soil and our plants. Read the book, *Compost Stew: A to Z*. Ask the children if they can identify some of the materials on the table, then assist them in constructing a small compost pile.
4. After the compost is constructed and their gloves are on, each child is given a stick and a magnifier so they can investigate the bins filled with compost, garden and potting soil. Encourage them to show each other what they find. Since many hands are involved, this is a great activity for teaching how to take turns and work together.
5. When classes are finished, the compost bin materials can be added to the community garden compost bin marked “incoming”.

Enjoying the Harvest

WHAT COULD BE MORE FUN than picking or digging your vegetables right from the garden and eating them on the spot! Whenever possible, that is exactly what we do. It never ceases to amaze us that 3-5 year olds are so delighted to eat salad and raw vegetables in the morning!

When children grow their own food and taste a really fresh vegetable, often for the first time, it can be a very unique experience. If there is plenty left after their morning vegetable snack, they can bring some of their harvest back to the classroom or take it home to their families at the end of the day. Their parents and teachers cannot believe that they are eating fresh vegetables and these young sprouts are even encouraging the adults to eat fresh vegetables too!



WHAT YOU NEED:

- Garden gloves (set out in pairs)
- Bowls or colanders for harvesting
- Salad spinner to rinse off the veggies
- Reusable plates, bowls, napkins
- Salad dressing



Worm Bin Investigating



“VERMICULTURE” OR WORM COMPOSTING specifically with “red wigglers”, is a much-anticipated activity for Young Sprouts. They love exploring the bin for worms and worm feeding time. Like many of our focused activities, a group of 8-10 is ideal so that children can work together around the compost bin.

You can install the worms and their bedding in the bin or have the children help. The bedding consists of torn-up newspaper, a little coconut coir and some garden soil or compost. Add a little water to moisten, and then add worms! This is a good time to reinforce the concept of recycling, as using the newspaper and food scraps gives new life to these materials that would otherwise be considered garbage.

The children can “feed” the worms fruit and vegetable scraps, a small amount of pulverized eggshells and torn-up paper before “putting the worms to bed” by closing the lid. Worms do not like direct sunlight or heat so you must limit their exposure to the elements.



This is a homemade worm bin, left and below. Instructions for how to make the bin are on page 36.



WHAT YOU NEED:

- Sticks, wooden plant markers or popsicle sticks
- Garden gloves (set out in pairs)
- Children’s magnifiers (10-12)
- Worm bin
- Bin bedding (torn-up paper, soil, coconut coir)
- Kitchen & garden scraps
- Watering can

garden tips

Building a worm bin does not require special skills and you need only one tool, a drill. You can also purchase a worm bin if you prefer.



Identifying Flora & Fauna

IDENTIFYING LIVING THINGS can be an organized activity as well as part of every visit to the garden. No opportunity should be missed to observe and appreciate nature all around us.

After greeting the children as they enter the garden and work their way past the community garden plots, we ask if anyone notices anything new or different in the garden since their last visit. We'll often point out new growth on a vegetable or a brightly colored flower or a bumblebee loaded up with pollen and ask if anyone knows what it is. Our garden has been designated a migratory bird stopover on the Atlantic Flyway by Audubon CT, so we make it a point to listen and watch for visiting birds.

These simple activities invite a chorus of sightings and provide a great way for children to practice their colors, counting and simple classification. At the end of the season, they often know many of the names of the vegetables, herbs, birds and bugs.



garden tip
There are so many games you can create to make identifying plants, insects and birds really fun while learning. Encourage the children to be vegetable spies and to practice using their senses on a visit to the herb garden. Another fun game is "Go Find It" (see photo to the left that shows just a few of the cards in the deck).

VEGETABLE SPIES

THIS ACTIVITY CAN BE DONE IN SMALL TEAMS with an adult leader or in larger groups. Simply hold up a picture card or a fresh vegetable and ask if anyone can find it in the garden. If a particular vegetable is not growing in the garden, bring extra vegetables and place them in the garden temporarily. Ask the children to name the vegetable and identify the features they observe, such as color, texture, size and shape. Children will quickly learn to "spy" vegetables and proudly say their names aloud. With a little preparation, this exercise can be done indoors during bad weather.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Eyes wide open
- Laminated picture cards of vegetables, vegetables growing in the garden or brought for the class to "spy".



SENSORY GARDEN HERBS

THE YOUNG SPROUTS SENSORY GARDEN has a variety of scented herbs, and many that are perfect for the children to taste. This activity can be as simple as a quick stop on the way to another activity, or a longer visit to explore several herbs. We pick a few sprigs from different herb plants, pass them around and ask if anyone knows their names. They are welcome to look, smell and taste. Invariably there will be a range of comments from "yuck" to "yum". Some children will recognize the smell or taste from a dish that is cooked at home and comment.

We try to pick some herbs for the children to bring back to the classroom, and if the weather is not conducive to a garden visit, the herb clippings are brought into the classroom for observation and an Herb ID Game.

Herb ID Game

Place an ample selection of herbs in the middle of each table and give each child an activity sheet with pictures of those herbs. Children try to match the herbs to the sheet. Help those who are stumped by prompting with questions that will help the child identify the herb in question. Some want to tape them on their sheet while others may want to keep them in a cup of water to take home. (see page 34)

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Eyes wide open and noses ready to smell
- 3-4 fresh scented herbs (pre-washed)
- If indoors for this activity, use activity sheetpg. xx



What's in the Compost? the Greenhouse? What are these Big Blue Barrels?

AFTER WE WEED OUR GARDEN, WE BRING OUR WEEDS in trugs to the community garden compost area and check out the compost bins. We start by asking, "What's in the compost bins?" The children observe and identify what they see. We talk about the stages of compost and what compost is.

We continue to the greenhouse and ask, "What's in the greenhouse?" This is another opportunity for the children to observe and identify. Pre-schoolers are captivated by almost anything new and the bright, white gravel on the greenhouse floor is no exception! We bring everyone's attention back to what is growing in the greenhouse and then move on to the rain barrel system.

"What are these big blue barrels?" "Where does the water come from?" We explain that we have three groups of recycled, food-safe rain barrels in the garden that take advantage of the rain water that lands on the greenhouse and the shed roofs. The water runs down the gutters and into the barrels so that we can collect it and use it in the garden. We bring a couple of large watering cans with us and give the children turns filling them from the spigot. This is another teachable moment when we can talk about nature, water, recycling and what plants need to grow.



WHAT YOU NEED:

- Weeds for the compost in buckets or trugs
- Additional kitchen scraps volunteers bring from home
- Two large watering cans

garden tips

If you don't have access to a greenhouse, you can cover a garden bed using hoops and floating row cover or build a small coldframe with old windows.



Kinetic Movement

MOVING IN THE GARDEN

SOMETIMES YOUNG SPROUTS NEED A LITTLE MOTIVATION to get those bodies moving in the morning. One way to get energy flowing is to elicit their reactions to prompts for different levels of activity—high, medium and low.

Here are some ideas that you can suggest to the group or illustrate with your own body if it looks like the students are stumped:

- Hop or move like a bunny
- Blow in the wind like a leaf
- Pretend you are peeking over a high fence
- Grow straight and tall like a tree
- Swing like a playground swingset (a combination of collapsing and suspension in an arc)
- Vibrate like a hummingbird
- Feel sunshine on your face
- Feel dandelion fuzz or lambs ears tickle your face
- Hear birds sing or acorns falling in the woods
- Sniff and smell the flowers



PLANTING A GARDEN ON YOUR LEGS



THIS ACTIVITY IS A GREAT OPTION FOR A RAINY DAY. Grab a clean tarp or a blanket for a small group to sit on. Have the children form a circle and sit in pike position (legs horizontal, together and straight, back straight and tall). Explain that they will be planting a garden on their legs.

Have the children start by "plowing the land" on their legs, then "plant" seeds on their feet, shins, knees, thighs and ankles. They might reach behind them to one side to "grab" a watering can to water their gardens and reach back to the other side to get their hand tools to cultivate their gardens. Finally, they can "harvest" the garden and pretend to eat the vegetables they harvest. What else can they pretend? Ask them and I bet they will have ideas.

Song & Dance



DANCING LIVENS UP THE GARDEN! One of our important goals is to make being in nature a much anticipated, positive experience. We may be there to garden, but our program is also about waking up the sense of wonder and providing an outlet for creative expression outdoors.

Sometimes we use dance to help some of our sleepyheads connect to the garden. It's fun to learn how things grow with a garden-related story that is put to music. Now a perennial favorite, *Up, Down, and Around* by Katherine Ayers & Nadine Westcott is a great example. One of our longtime volunteers, Ms. Annie, created a dance one day in the garden, to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star". It encourages the children to express what we have just read by interpreting it with their bodies. The *Up, Down, and Around* song and dance is now a standard garden activity for students, volunteers and teachers alike.

up, down, and around (to "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star")

In the dirt we'll dig a row,
Drop some seeds and watch them grow.

Dirt piles up, seeds go down,
Water splashes around and around.

Corn grows up, carrots grow down,
Cucumbers climb around and around.

Peppers grow up, potatoes grow down,
Pumpkins vine around and around.

Broccoli grows up, beets grow down,
Green beans wind around and around.

Okra grows up, onions grow down,
Tomatoes twine around and around.

Fresh and tasty, get a bunch!
Pick some, pull some, LET'S HAVE LUNCH!!

Garden Yoga

GARDEN YOGA HAS BEEN SO POPULAR WITH THE CHILDREN that we end most of our sessions with a few poses. We start with a few big breaths then use the chart below as a starting point. We have the young sprouts space out at arms-distance from their closest neighbor so that there is plenty of room to explore the poses without knocking each other down.

Yoga helps children connect with their senses and their breath, to achieve a calmer disposition that opens them up to better observe, listen and explore. Making connections to nature through creative movement is fun for teachers and volunteers too. Everyone leaves the garden with a big smile!

GARDEN YOGA FOR KIDS



Pretend to be a tree
Tree Pose: Stand on one leg. Bend the other knee and place the sole of your foot on your inner thigh. Sway like a tree in the breeze. Now the other side.



Pretend to be a frog
Squat Pose: Come down to a squat with your knees apart and arms resting between your knees. Touch your hands to the ground. Jump like a frog.



Pretend to be a seed
Child's Pose: Sit back on your heels and bring your forehead down to rest on the floor. Pretend to be a seed in the garden.



Pretend to be a butterfly
Cobbler's Pose: Sit on your buttocks with a tall spine. Bend your legs with the soles of your feet together. Flap your legs like the wings of a butterfly.



Pretend to be a flower
Flower Pose: Lift your bent legs, balancing on your sitting bones. Weave your arms under your legs, palms up. Pretend to be a flower in bloom.

<https://childhood101.com/yoga-for-kids-a-walk-through-the-garden/>

Garden & Nature Stories

GARDEN AND NATURE-RELATED ACTIVITIES can support every subject young children learn in school, as well as provide a perfect environment for practicing life skills such as sharing, taking turns and showing empathy.

Young sprouts love to have stories read to them in their garden. We encourage inquiry and discussion, and the children use this as a relaxed time to identify colors, count, name the things they see on the pages and interact with the stories.

Books about gardens, vegetables and insects work hand-in-hand with many of our garden lessons. For instance, when we bring out the worm bin or a container of soil or compost to explore, we choose a book about worms, insects or composting. When we plant seeds, we read books about seeds and how plants grow.



WHAT YOU NEED:

- A selection of books that compliments the garden lesson for the day. See our book list on page 35.



THIS SCAVENGER HUNT is really for outdoors but if the weather is not cooperating, you can set up a scavenger hunt in a classroom or in the break room. This could take preparation, but worth the effort. As items are found, invite all the children to share and observe.

Garden Scavenger Hunt

CAN YOU FIND?

- 1 Something fuzzy
- 2 Two kinds of seeds
- 3 A red vegetable
- 4 A green vegetable
- 5 A yellow flower
- 6 An orange flower
- 7 Something brown
- 8 Two different kinds of leaves
- 9 A chewed leaf
- 10 A crawling insect
- 11 A flying insect
- 12 A beautiful small rock
- 13 A pinecone
- 14 A garden tool
- 15 Something round
- 16 Something straight
- 17 Something smooth
- 18 Something rough

Pollinator Puppets

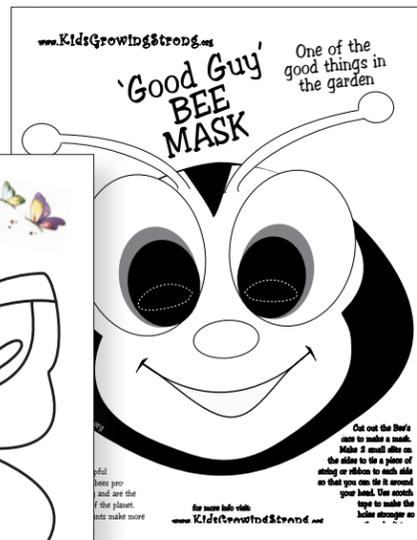
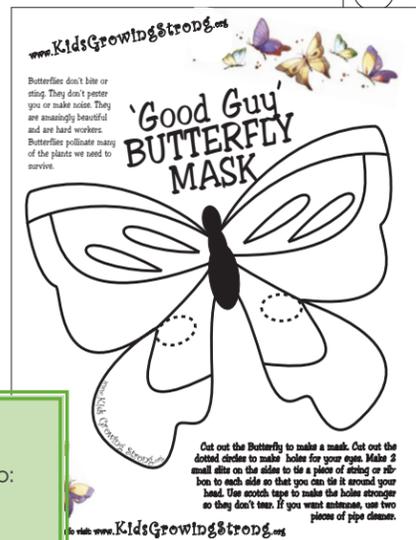
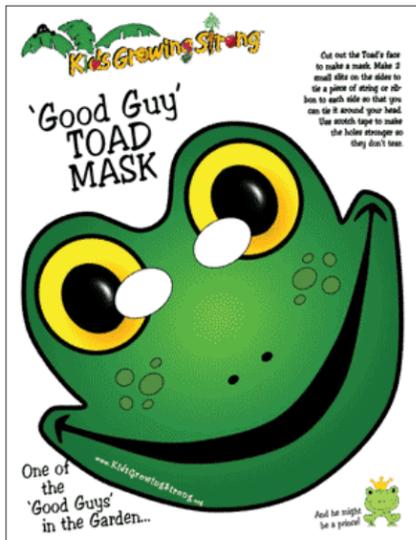


POLLINATOR PUPPETS MAKE FOR A VERY SPECIAL DAY INDOORS. The children sit in rapt attention as they listen to this interactive presentation on native pollinators. The colored felt swatches on the table correspond to the colors that specific pollinators are attracted to. As the leader pulls pollinator puppets one-by-one from a big bag, she holds up a corresponding colored felt swatch so that the children can make this important connection. Then she can show them real or artificial flowers that also correspond to the pollinators. This reinforces both the color and type of flower each pollinator likes best. The children take turns playing with the puppets, swatches and flowers and then each child gets a pollinator mask to wear and bring home.



WHAT YOU NEED:

- Stuffed puppets
- felt swatches
- real or artificial flowers
- "Pollinator" bag
- Good Guy Pollinator Masks copied onto colored card stock, cut out and ready to put on



resource tips

MASKS can be copied from pages 48-51 or go to: <https://kidsgrowingstrong.org/masks>

Puppets can be sourced from www.audubon.org, www.acornnaturalists.com or amazon.com.

Artificial flowers can be purchased at thrift stores or at Michaels Store.

Garden & Nature Art Projects

LEAF RUBBINGS

LEAF RUBBING is a fascinating way to make beautiful, natural art. Children can create an instant picture just by covering a leaf with paper and running a crayon over the top. Making a leaf print is much more than just a pretty picture—it is also a peek into the science of trees.

You may want to read a book about leaves. There are two on our reading list that you may like: "Why Do Leaves Change Color" by Betsy Maestro for National Geographic Learning and "Autumn Leaves" by Ken Robbins.

Leaf rubbings can be cut out and taped to the window at school if the teacher likes the idea or they can be brought home.

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Leaves, from a variety of trees and garden plants
- Crayons and paper
- Scissors



PAINTED ROCKS

CHILDREN OF ALL AGES LOVE TO PAINT ROCKS. River stones can be purchased for this, but this activity is also a great example of using freely, accessible materials from nature to make something new. You can collect rocks at the beach or take the children out for a rock hunt around the garden.

After the rocks are painted and dried on recycled newspaper, we spray them with a fixative and the children place them in the garden the following week.

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Rocks
- Tempera paint
- Paint brushes
- Can of spray fixative



Garden & Nature Art Projects

MEMORY BOOKS

WE LOVE THIS IDEA but have yet to try it. It requires a 2" binder for each child. You would write each child's name on their binder spine. The first thing that goes into the binder is a note written by the parents on Parents Night. Parents are provided with paper or notecards, pens and stickers to create their messages to their children. Then you can read the parent's notes to the children on the first day of school.

The binders can be kept on a classroom shelf all year and any artwork or flat projects that you do with the children can be kept in the binder and sent home at the end of the school year. Children can replace their names on the spines when they are comfortable writing them and decorate the binders whenever they have time during the year. This is a precious keepsake for the children and their parents.

WHAT YOU NEED:

- 2-inch binder for each child
- Plastic sleeves
- Paper, pens and stickers



GARDEN JOURNALS

GARDEN JOURNALS can be handled in much the same way, minus the note from the parents. The focus would be for the children to use this book to record their garden and nature experiences. The binders would go home at the end of the year and also make a wonderful keepsake.



Garden & Nature Art Projects

BIRDHOUSE PAINTING

BIRDHOUSES ARE FUN TO PAINT AND EXPLORE for their inhabitants, bright colors and interesting shapes. They provide a pretty backdrop in the children's garden, for the painters as well as the volunteers and other visitors to the garden to enjoy.

Teachers and volunteers can paint two base coats of paint after engaging the children to decide on the colors. The birdhouses can be decorated by the children with tempera paint. Two coats of clear varnish can be sprayed or painted on the birdhouses before hanging them outdoors.

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Inexpensive birdhouses from Michaels Store
- Sand paper
- Tempera paints
- Variety of paint brushes
- Varnish



POTTED PLANTS FOR MOM AND DAD

THIS IS A GOOD PLASTIC RECYCLING PROJECT, as the pots are yogurt containers with holes punched in the bottoms. The children plant marigolds in the pots at our portable potting station. Then they decorate pre-cut bands of colored paper with stickers, markers and crayons. Once the bands are fastened around the yogurt containers, the present is ready to bring home to Mom and Dad.

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Empty, clean yogurt containers
- Marigolds
- Soil and portable potting station
- Strips of colored construction paper, cut to the height of your container & wide enough to overlap in the back
- Double-stick tape to secure the strip of colored paper
- Colored markers and crayons for decorating
- Variety of stickers for further decoration (volunteers may have some of these at home)



Science and Nature

BUTTERFLY HATCH

WE LOVE THIS IDEA and have yet to try it, however, our friends at Audubon swear by this activity for young children. It is suggested that you purchase a kit such as the "Living Butterfly Garden" from Acorn Naturalists. A month or so before you are ready to release the butterflies, you will need to receive the larvae and food, which will help the butterflies reach the larval stage. This is a great way for children to observe butterflies throughout their lifecycle and then release them into the garden!

WHAT YOU NEED:

- *Living Butterfly Garden Kit (\$25.00)*
- *Larvae*



LADYBUG RELEASE

LADYBUG RELEASES are almost as much fun for our Young Sprouts as they are for the adults! You will need to purchase the Ladybugs ahead of the release and keep them in a refrigerator until it is time to wake them up. They come in a pouch and as you begin to distribute them into each child's cupped hands, they may begin to emerge on their own and crawl on anyone who is nearby. Of course, no one is concerned as we all think of them as very cute insects. Cute as they are, ladybugs are great predators of aphids and will get to work in the garden as soon as they are released.

There is a Ladybug Coloring sheet on page 53 that you can use during your garden class or send back to the classroom.

WHAT YOU NEED:

- *Ladybugs (\$22.50 for 4500 lady beetles)*
- *Ladybug coloring sheets*
- *Crayons*



resource tips

Recently we have learned that most purchased ladybugs are not native to our area. You may want to do some research to see if you can find a native species. Then weigh the pros & cons before purchasing. We recommend that you plant more species that attract lady beetles naturally too.

<https://www.treehugger.com/lawn-garden/why-you-shouldnt-buy-ladybugs-natural-pest-control-your-garden.html>

<https://www.insectlore.com/>

Garden Art Show

A GARDEN ART SHOW IS SO MUCH FUN FOR THE YOUNG SPROUTS and provides a wonderful way for the children to express their appreciation of nature and the garden. You can decide on a theme, or just let the young artists have full creative expression. Either way, the result is exciting and a great source of pride for all of our young artists. The artwork can be done indoors or out and over time. On a nice day you can hang their masterpieces up for all to see! Invite all the classes to come out to view the garden art show, or send a notice home ahead of time so that parents may also get a chance to see their childrens' artwork and their garden!



Planting Potatoes

PLANTING POTATOES IS A VERY SPECIAL ACTIVITY. We plant potatoes or potato pieces with "eyes" that are ready to sprout. This is obviously very different from planting seeds that bear no resemblance to the final vegetable.

It takes several months to complete the full cycle from planting in the early spring to the mid-to-late summer day that we dig up masses of beautiful, fresh potatoes together. We plant several varieties, shapes and colors of potatoes because it is really interesting and fun. We also try to plant enough so that everyone gets a chance not only dig potatoes but also take a few home to their families.



WHAT YOU NEED:

- Trowels (arrange on garden bench or in a bed)
- A shovel (for the teacher to help loosen up the soil)
- Garden gloves (set out in pairs)
- Containers filled with prepared potatoes

garden tip

You will need to order the potatoes during the winter months, as they tend to sell out quickly. It is better to get your starts from a reputable supplier rather than buy potatoes at the store. If potatoes are small or have one eye, leave them whole. Otherwise, cut them into pieces with at least one eye per piece. Place on trays and allow the cuts to "heal". Then they are ready to plant.



Digging Potatoes

THERE IS NOTHING MORE EXCITING IN THE WORLD than the much anticipated day that we finally dig up our "hidden treasure" in the garden!

Everyone gets a turn to dig down deep and unearth the potatoes that they planted months ago. This is a good lesson in patience, even for the volunteers, who get pretty excited too!



WHAT YOU NEED:

- Trowels (arrange on garden bench or in a bed)
- A shovel (for the teacher to help loosen up the soil)
- Garden gloves (set out in pairs)
- Trugs or buckets

Full of Beans (and Peas) Day

ON FULL OF BEANS DAY we enjoy and explore legumes of all colors and sizes. You can use the poster on the right to start a lively conversation about beans and peas and encourage lots of interaction.

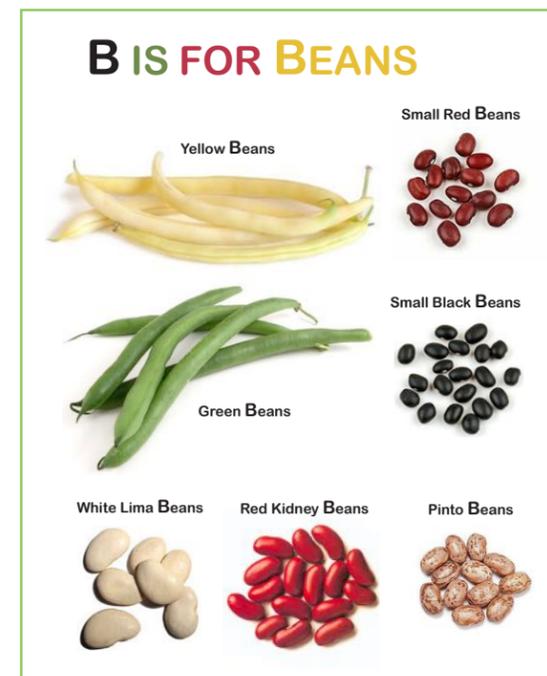
One volunteer can bring bags of the five dried beans plus the fresh yellow and green beans pictured on the sheet below left. Bring copies of the sheet found on page xx and have the children match up the dried and fresh beans to the activity sheet. Show the children how to "snap" the fresh beans and discover the seeds within the pod. Beans can also be used for sorting and counting.

Later in the year, leave some bean pods on the vines to dry and save the beans for the following year's crop. (They can also be used as dry beans.)

Young Sprouts can use beans, markers and crayons to decorate the "B" sheet pictured below right, which can be copied from page xx.

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Several varieties of beans, enough for everyone to have several of each
- Both coloring sheets printed out, found on pages xxx
- Markers and crayons





TODAY'S VEGETABLE IS

FULL OF BEANS!

WE EAT HEALTHY FOOD EVERY DAY!

There are lots of kinds of BEANS

There are **GREEN** beans

There are **YELLOW** beans

There are **RED** beans

There are **PURPLE** beans

There are **WHITE** beans

There are **BLACK** beans

There are even **beans!**





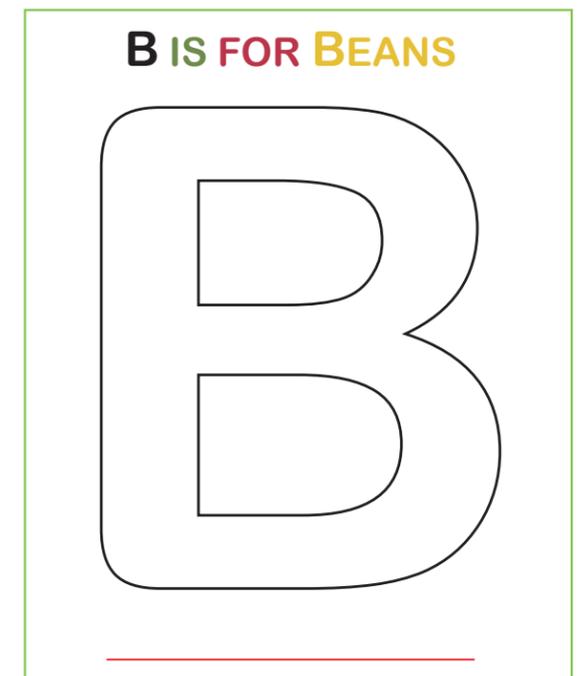



DID YOU KNOW?

BEANS ARE GOOD FOR YOU!
They have vitamins that make your bones

GREEN BEANS ARE CALLED "SNAP BEANS"
because they snap when you bend them in half!

"FULL OF BEANS?"
It means you are a little bit silly & you have lots of energy!



Veggie Parade and End of Summer Celebration

IN MID-AUGUST WHEN THE GARDEN IS FULL OF VEGETABLES and the children are about to have summer school break, we have a special Veggie Parade and End of Summer Celebration. All four classes gather outside and we "parade" through the garden and around the grounds of the apartment complex where our garden is located. When we finish, we gather for vegetable snacks, dancing and outdoor fun. The children and the teachers look forward to this day each year. It is the big finale of our summer growing season, as our weekly visits come to an end. AND, each child gets an official gardening certificate to bring home!



PROPS:

- Veggie banners for adults to carry. These were painted on foam core. (see photo below)
- Black & white images of each child's favorite veggie that they have colored (see pgs 54-61). Attach them to recycled paint sticks and the children carry them.

NIBBLES:

- Cut veggies
- Salad dressings
- Hummus
- Agua Fresca - water infused with fruits, herbs & vegetables

MUSIC:

- Portable bluetooth speaker and cell phone with music
- Guitarist if you have one



SPECIAL EVENTS

Harvest Celebration

IN MID-OCTOBER WHEN PUMPKINS ARE ABUNDANT and fall veggies and herbs are still in the garden, we return to the Head Start school for our annual Harvest Celebration. We organize the visit around a seated activity and a pumpkin hunt—all outdoors—weather permitting. Since we have four classrooms of children, we alternate the activities. 2-3 volunteers are stationed in the classroom or at the picnic tables for the seated activity and 2-3 volunteers are stationed in the garden for the pumpkin hunt.



One class may start with a story, then do an herb identification activity (see page 17) and finish with a snack while another group is out in the garden looking for and harvesting what is still growing in the garden and finishing with a mini pumpkin hunt. For the herb activity, we harvest earlier that morning (or buy herbs if necessary) and bring the herb game sheets. We read a story with a harvest theme and then enjoy a fresh snack of veggies with salad dressing and some apple cider.



Out in the garden, it's a great opportunity for the children to see what has changed since they went on summer vacation in mid-August. We ask them what looks different and discuss the changes they notice. We "hide" our mini 'Jack Be Little' pumpkins around the garden and the search begins! Everyone gets to take a pumpkin home.

We found these fun ideas online. Be creative and change up the activities as you see fit!



WHAT YOU NEED:

- Freshly picked or purchased herbs
- Harvest themed book
- Herb activity sheets
- Garden gloves
- Mini 'Jack Be Little' pumpkins
- Veggie snacks
- Apple cider

Favorite Books

BOOKS ABOUT GARDENS

Up, Down, and Around	Katherine Ayers & Nadine Westcott
The Very Hungry Caterpillar	Eric Carle
The Very Lonely Firefly	Eric Carle
The Very Busy Spider	Eric Carle
The Very Quiet Cricket	Eric Carle
Planting A Rainbow	Lois Ehlert
Eating the Alphabet	Lois Ehlert
Growing Vegetable Soup	Lois Ehlert
How My Garden Grew	Anne & Harlow Rockwell
Compost Stew: A to Z	Mary McKenna Siddals
Carrot & Pea: An Unlikely Friendship	Morag Hood
Tops & Bottoms	Janet Stevens
Oliver's Vegetables	Vivian French
The Little Red Hen	Byron Barton
Who's in the Garden?	Phyllis Gershtater
Butterfly, Butterfly	Petr Horáček
A Fruit is a Suitcase for Seeds	Jean Richards
Miss Maple's Seeds	Eliza Wheeler
Planting Seeds	Nancy Wallace
A Seed is Sleepy	Dianna Hutts Aston
Oh Say Can You Seed?	Cat in the Hat Book
On Beyond Bugs: All About Insects	Cat in the Hat Book
How a Seed Grows	Helene J. Jordan
Up in the Garden & Down in the Dirt	Kate Messner
How Groundhog's Garden Grew	Lynne Cherry
Our Community Garden	Barbara Pollak

BOOKS ABOUT TREES & NATURE

I Can Name 50 Trees Today!	Cat in the Hat Book
Tap the Magic Tree	Christie Matheson
Fall Walk	Virginia Brimhall Snow

GARDENING WITH KIDS

Rocks, Dirt, Worms & Weeds	Jeff Hutton
The Book of Gardening Projects for Kids:	Whitney Cohen
101 Ways to Get Kids Outside, Dirty, and Having Fun	
Hollyhocks and Honeybees: Garden Projects for Young Children	Sarah Starbuck, Margo Olthoff and Karen Midden
My First Gardening Book: 35 easy & fun projects for budding gardeners	CICO Kidz

COMPOST BIN INSTRUCTIONS

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Drill
- 1/4 Drill Bit (or similar)
- Gorilla Tape (Not Duct Tape)
- Rubbing Alcohol
- Weed Block Filter Barrier
- Two 14 Gallon heavy duty plastic storage bins (we use the Rubbermaid Roughneck)

STEP 1 PREPARE THE BOTTOM BIN

- Choose one of the bins to be the bottom bin and drill two parallel sets of holes. Measure from the bottom of the bin 2 inches up and drill the 1st row of holes.
- Drill the next row 1/2 inch above the 1st row. Repeat on the other side. (no filter barrier is needed in this bin.)
- The bottom bin is done.

STEP 2 PREPARE THE TOP BIN

- Drill 2 rows of parallel holes at the top of the second bin. Measure from the top of the bin 2 inches down; drill your 1st set of holes.
- Measure 1/2 inch below that 1st row; drill the 2nd row of holes. Repeat on the other side of bin.
- On the base of the bin drill holes all over the bottom to ensure good drainage. Space evenly about 1 inch apart. You can also place holes down the center.
- Take the lid for the top bin and drill 2 rows of holes around the lid. Space them evenly about 1/2 inch to 3/4 inch apart.

STEP 3 FILTER PAPER ON THE INSIDE

- If you like, measure and cut filter barrier to cover the holes on the sides and bottom of the top bin. The fabric will help keep the worms and vermicompost in and flies out.
- Wipe areas that you will be adhering tape and filter barrier to with rubbing alcohol.
- Secure the barrier with gorilla tape or water resistant tape to finish the bin.

STEP 4 STACK THE BINS

- Take the bottom bin and place 2 bricks or blocks of wood in the bottom of the bin.
- Take the top bin and set it inside the bottom bin on top of the bricks or blocks.
- Now it is time to prepare the bedding for your worms.

STEP 5 WORM BIN BEDDING (Lasagna!)

- Make alternating layers of 1 to 2 inches of water-moistened bedding (cut up cardboard, paper egg cartons, shredded newspaper, and coconut coir) and a thin layer of kitchen scraps.
- Sprinkle a small amount of soil or compost in one of the food layers to add microbes and grit for the worms.
- Make about three alternating layers so you have about 4 to 6 inches material in the bottom of the bin, covering the top layer of food waste with about 4 inches of shredded moistened newspaper.

STEP 6 WAIT FOR IT!

- Put the lid on the bin and let it sit for 3- 5 days. You could add worms right away but it goes a long way to improving the composting process if you can let it sit for a few days before adding worms. When the worms arrive there will be lots of food ready to eat. They will feel so at home it will be like putting mints on their pillows.

STEP 7 TOSSING THE WORM BEDDING SALAD

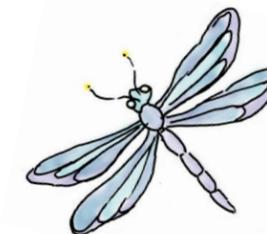
- When you open the bin there may be a slight smell but once your worms are installed this should not be the case at all.
- Take off the top layer of newspaper and mix up the layers below and add more water so it will be moist like a wrung out sponge.

STEP 8 READY, SET, WORMS!

- Now you are ready for the worms.
- You will put the worms on the mixed up layer of bedding and food. They will probably be in a clump so gently pull them apart into smaller clumps.
- Replace the lid and you are done.

The worms will be adjusting to the new environment for a few days and you just provided them with lots of yummy food so you don't need to feed them right away. After they have adjusted for approximately 3 days you can start feeding them every other day or every 3 days. Do not overfeed. If what you have added previously has not been mostly eaten, wait a day or so to feed again. Your worm population will grow to accommodate the food supply so be patient and eventually they will keep up with the kitchen scraps like champs.

I'm Growing My Own Vegetables!



CERTIFICATE

My name is

.....

and I am proud to be an
Armstrong Court Community Gardener!

My favorite vegetables are:

.....

.....

.....



CLASS OF _____

Sunflower Circle or Fort



Sunflowers are beautiful to children and their height is amazing even to adults. By growing them in full sun—in a circle or rectangle with a gap for an opening—you can create a fort or a cozy reading space. A nice bonus is that the inside of the circle will offer shade from the hot summer sun, and the children can grow beans, morning glories or peas up the sunflowers for an extra crop.

NOTE: A sunflower circle or fort is good for kids that are too big to fit under a teepee. Even grownups enjoy them!



Bean Tunnels & Growing Structures



Bean Tunnels can be made from a wide variety of materials such as: willow, bamboo, cattle wire or branches and woven or lashed together with garden string, twist ties or zip ties. Children and adults rarely tire of going through these tunnels. Hopping from stone to stone is great fun for the little ones!



Vertical Gardening



Repurposed Gutters



EcoFlex Vertical Garden
www.wayfair.com \$138.99

Houghton Wood Wall Planter
www.wayfair.com \$72.99



Garden Tower 2

The world's most advanced container garden

Vermacompost tube allows for loading of compostable kitchen scraps or nutrient media



Large opening pockets for easy planting of seeds or starter plants

Internal bearing track allows for one-handed 360° rotation

Wide stance legs insure stability even in severe wind conditions

6 cu. ft. soil capacity retains 14 gallons of water for low maintenance (simply water from the top)

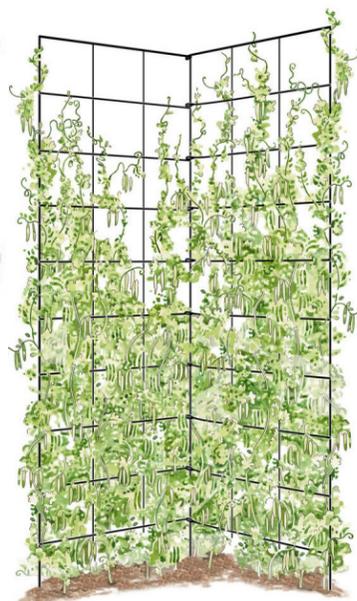
Heavy duty ultra-violet stabilized 100% food grade USA HDPE plastic

Removable screen allows compost to load into drawer

Two-gallon drawer for collecting compost & nutrient tea



Composter & Organic Container Garden
\$389.00 holds 50 plants
www.amazon.com



Two panel folding trellis
www.gardeners.com \$44.95

Raised Garden Beds



Modular Metal Raised Garden Bed
www.gardeners.com \$199.00/4 sizes
4' 9" x 3' 11", 6' 10-1/2" x 1' 9-1/2"
5' 5-1/2" x 3' 3", 3' x 3'



2' x 4' Elevated Cedar Planter Box
www.gardeners.com \$199.00



4' x 4' Cedar Raised Garden Bed
www.wayfair.com \$142.99

Smart Pots Big Bag Fabric Garden Bed
www.amazon.com

Original 50" x 12" \$34.05
Junior 36" x 12" \$30.95
Mini 24" x 8" \$14.29



6' x 3' Cedar Raised Garden Bed
www.wayfair.com \$429.99

B IS FOR BEANS

Yellow Beans



Small Red Beans



Small Black Beans



Green Beans



White Lima Beans



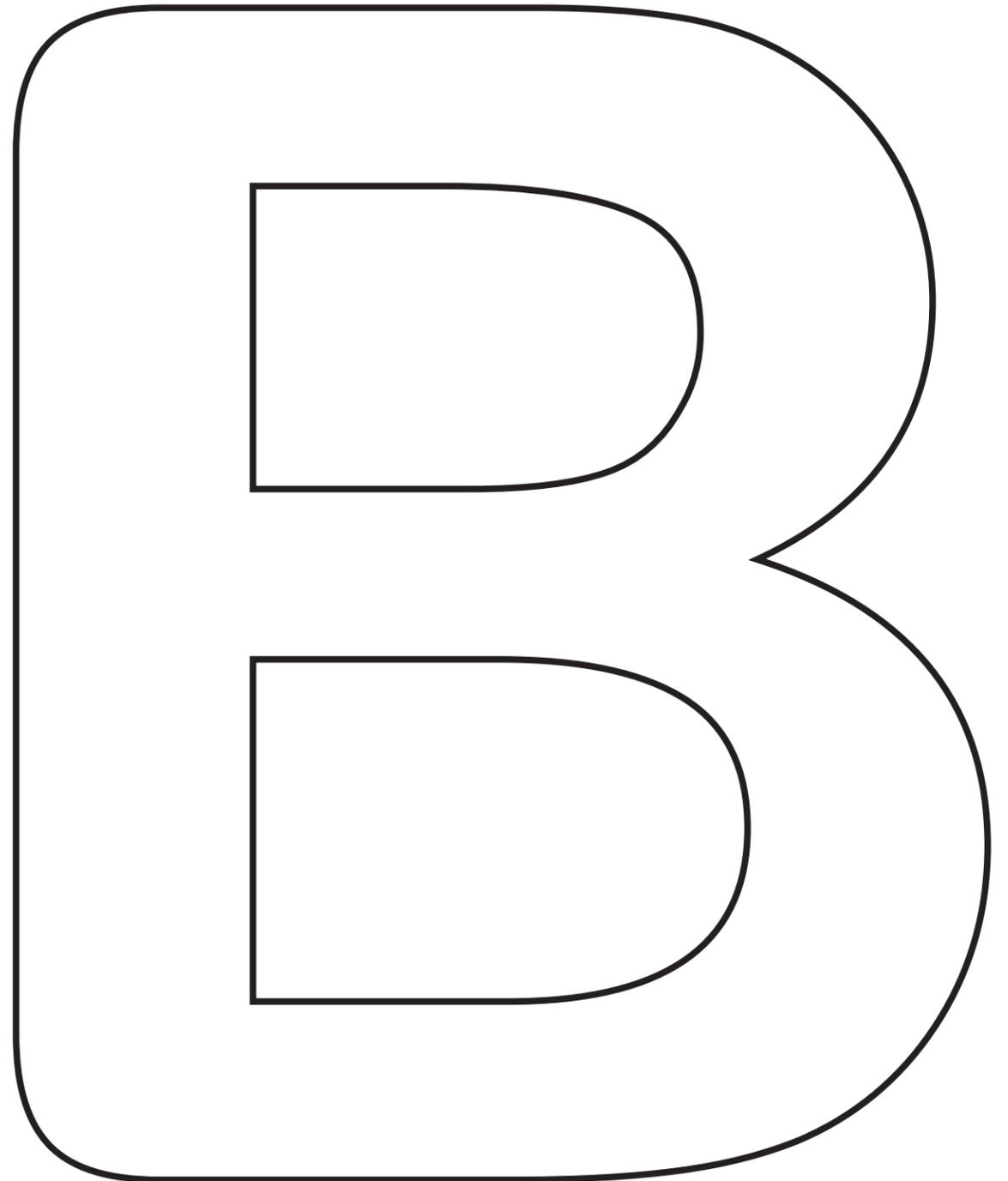
Red Kidney Beans



Pinto Beans



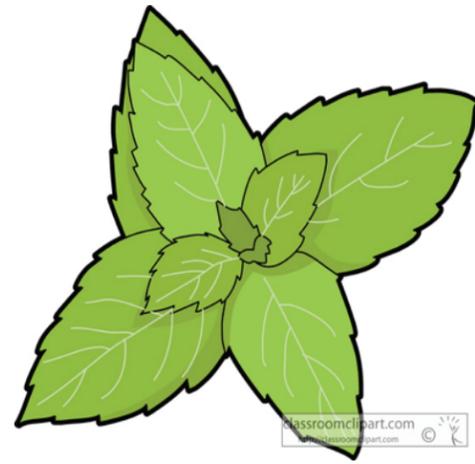
B IS FOR BEANS



R
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M
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R
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ROMERO



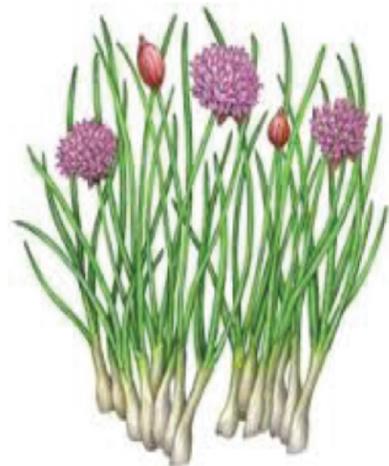
Mint Menta



Lemon Verbena
Limon Verbena



SAGE SALVIA



Chives Cebollino



Oregano

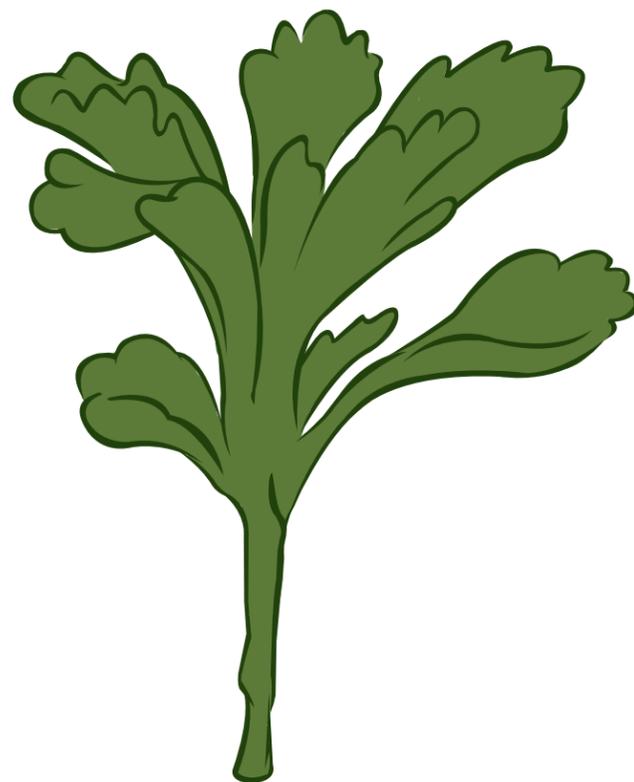


Scavenger Hunt Hiking

Can you find the following on your hike?
Circle the item when you find it.
Remember to be safe! Only look and don't touch.

PLANT SURVIVAL

Circle the items that this plant needs to survive.



SOIL



SUNSHINE



HAMMER

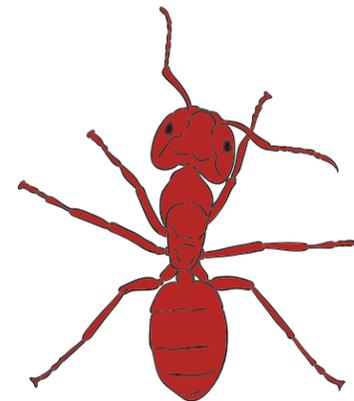


THE MOON



RAIN

Bug Identification Chart



Ant

Ant colonies have one queen who lays thousands of eggs.



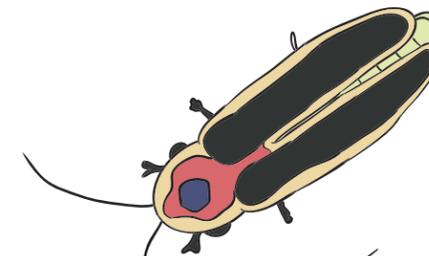
Bee

Bees help plants grow by spreading the pollen around to other plants.



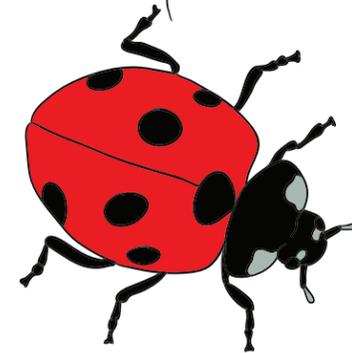
Spider

Some spider build web communities where up to 50,000 spiders may live.



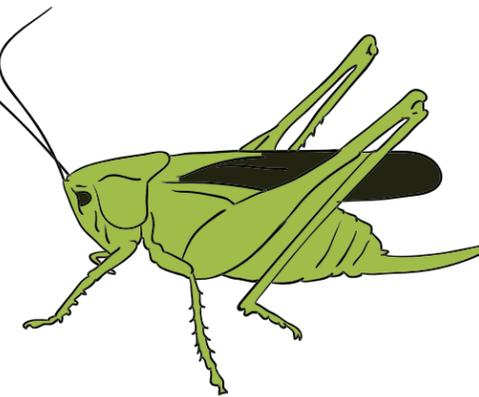
Firefly

Fireflies produce light with chemicals in their bodies.



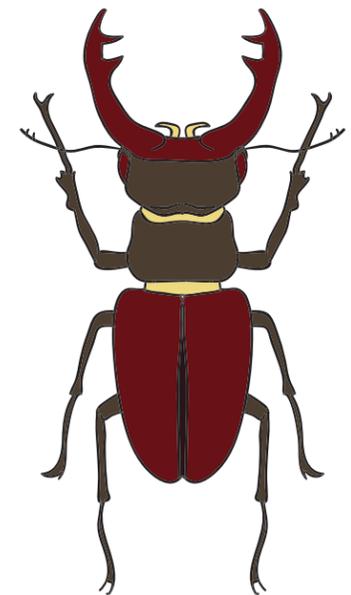
Ladybug

Ladybugs protect crops by eating plant-eating insects like aphids.



Grasshopper

An adult grasshopper can leap 10 times it's length.

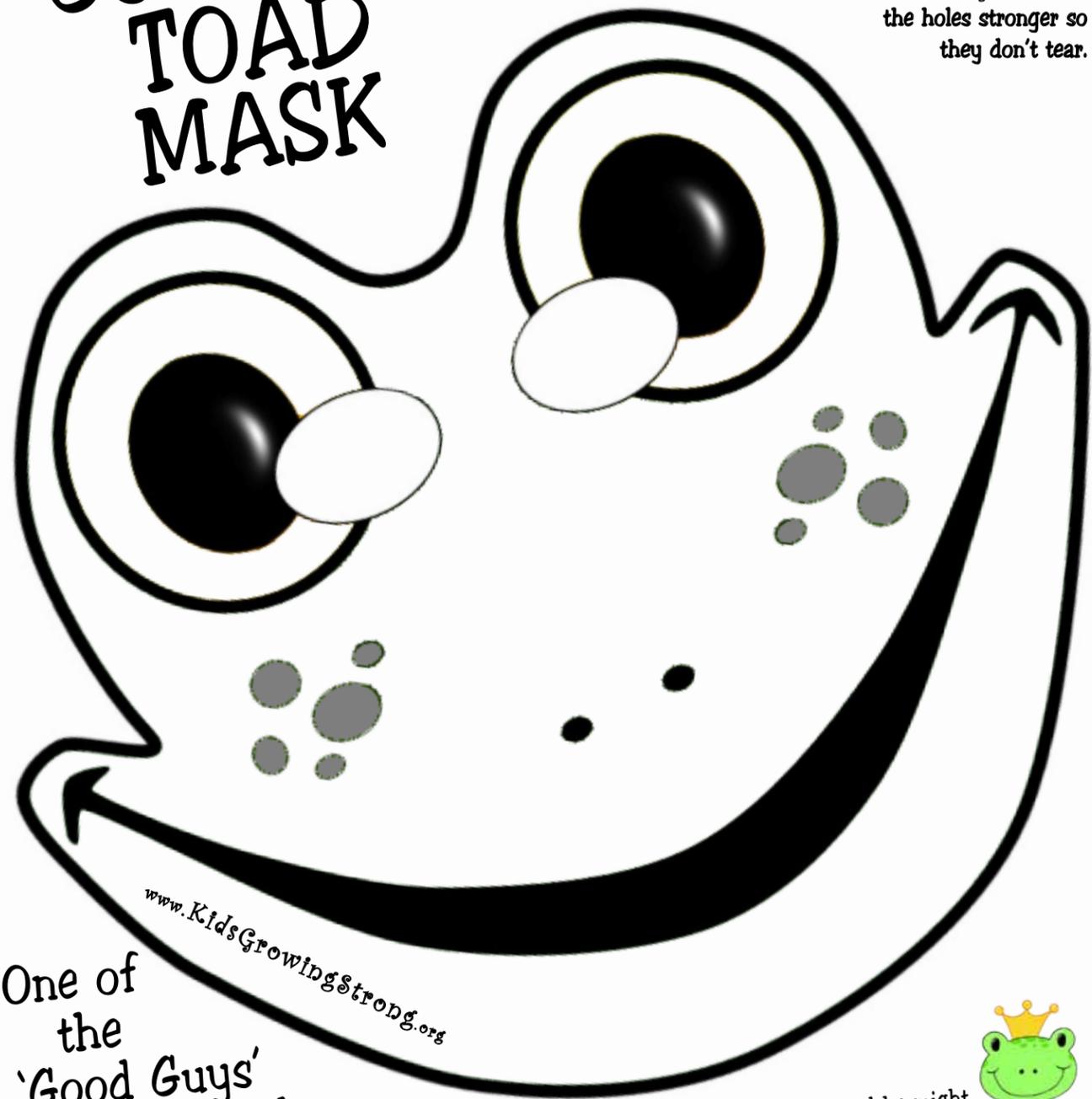


Stag Beetle

The large antlers on a stag beetle are really mandibles, which are its jaws.

'Good Guy' TOAD MASK

Cut out the Toad's face to make a mask. Make 2 small slits on the sides to tie a piece of string or ribbon to each side so that you can tie it around your head. Use scotch tape to make the holes stronger so they don't tear.

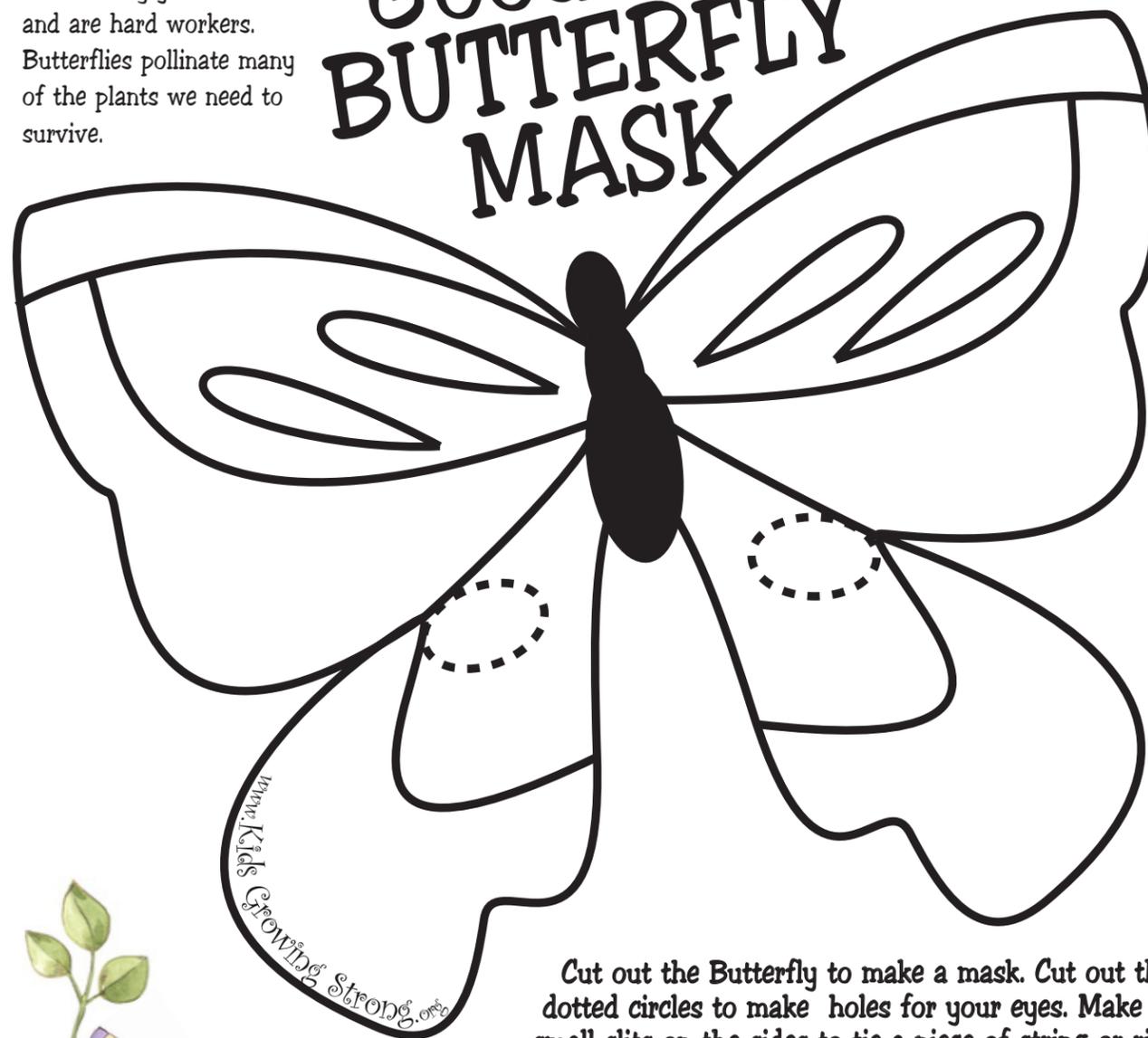


One of
the
'Good Guys'
in the Garden...



'Good Guy' BUTTERFLY MASK

Butterflies don't bite or sting. They don't pester you or make noise. They are amazingly beautiful and are hard workers. Butterflies pollinate many of the plants we need to survive.



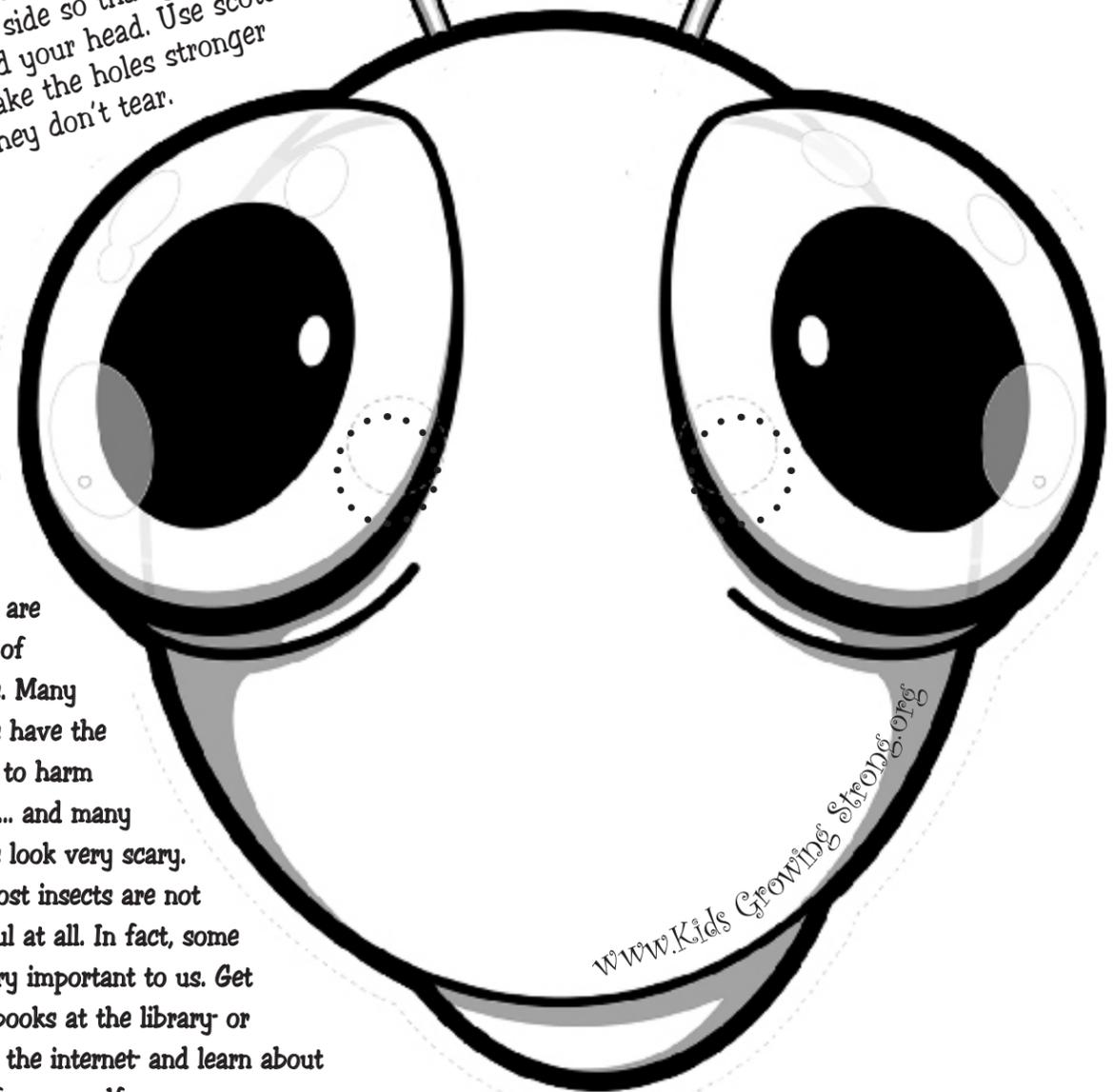
Cut out the Butterfly to make a mask. Cut out the dotted circles to make holes for your eyes. Make 2 small slits on the sides to tie a piece of string or ribbon to each side so that you can tie it around your head. Use scotch tape to make the holes stronger so they don't tear. If you want antennae, use two pieces of pipe cleaner.



for more info visit: www.KidsGrowingStrong.org

'Good Guy' BUG MASK

Color the bug's face. Cut it out to make a mask. Make holes for your eyes. Make 2 small slits near where the ears should be. Tie a piece of string or ribbon to each side so that you can tie it around your head. Use scotch tape to make the holes stronger so they don't tear.

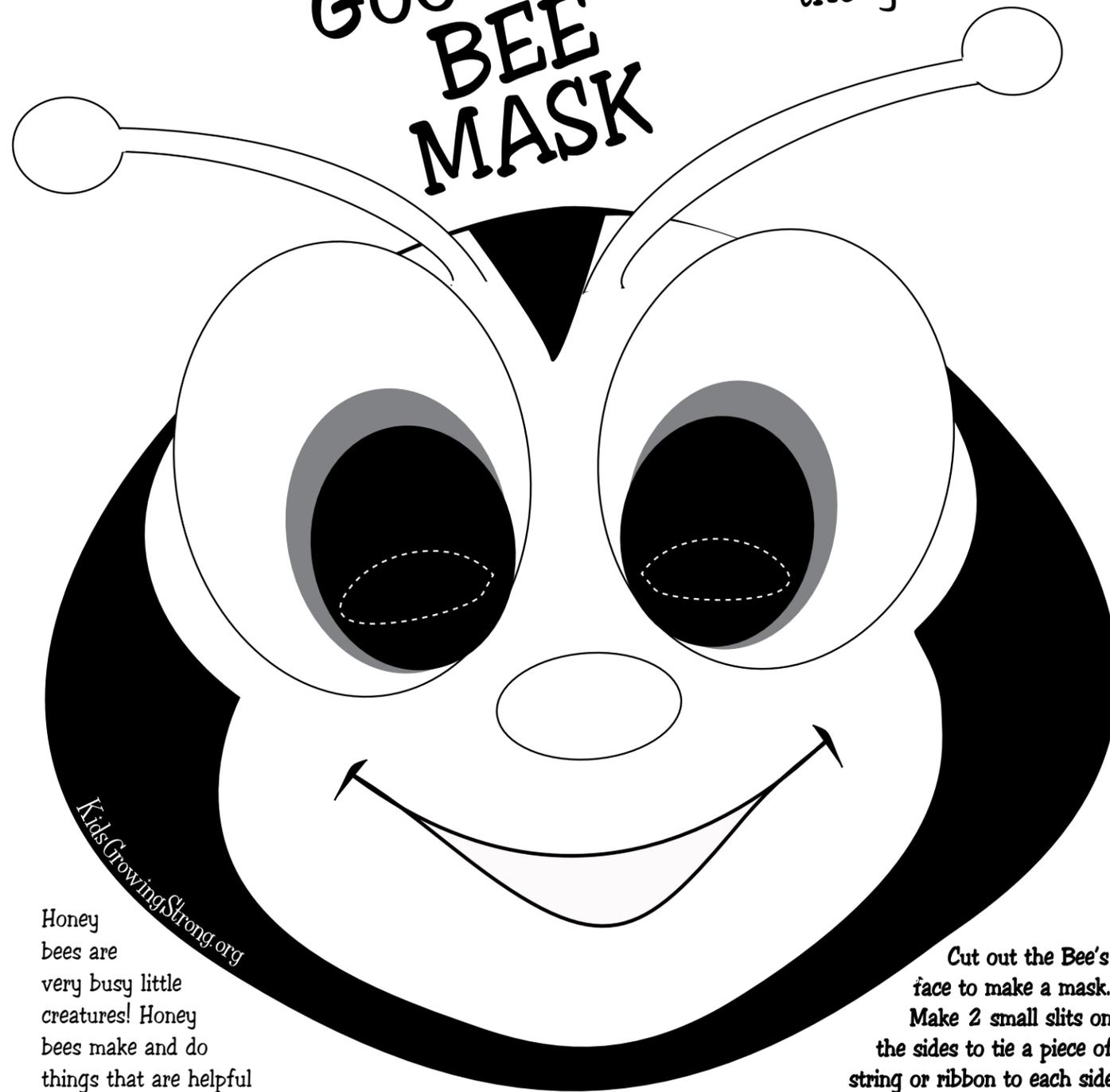


Lots of people are afraid of insects. Many insects have the ability to harm people... and many insects look very scary. But most insects are not harmful at all. In fact, some are very important to us. Get some books at the library or search the internet and learn about them for yourself.

for more info visit: www.KidsGrowingStrong.org

'Good Guy' BEE MASK

One of the good things in the garden

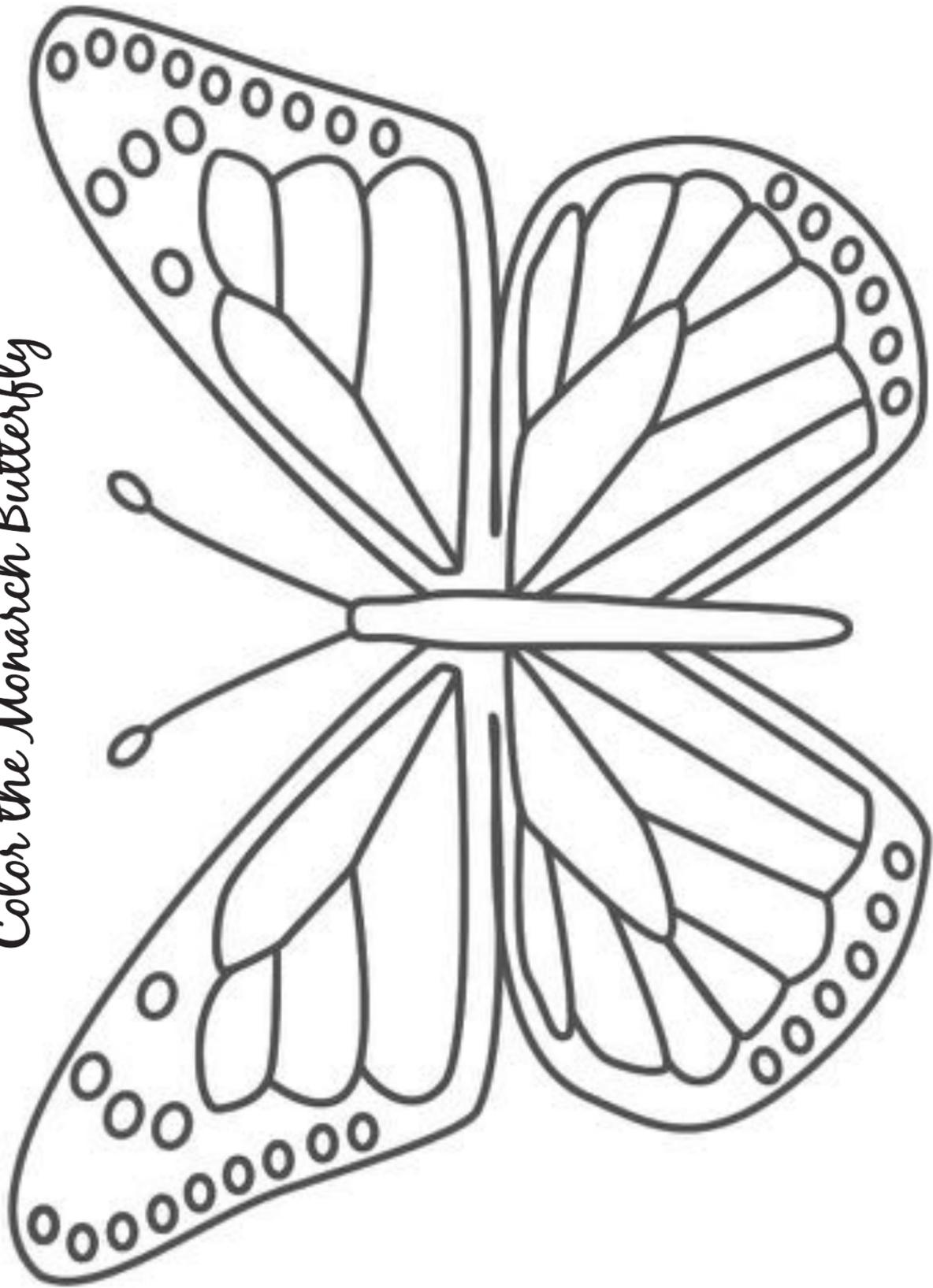


Honey bees are very busy little creatures! Honey bees make and do things that are helpful to humans. Honey bees provide us with honey and are the prime pollinators of the planet. Pollinators help plants make more plants. People need plants to survive.

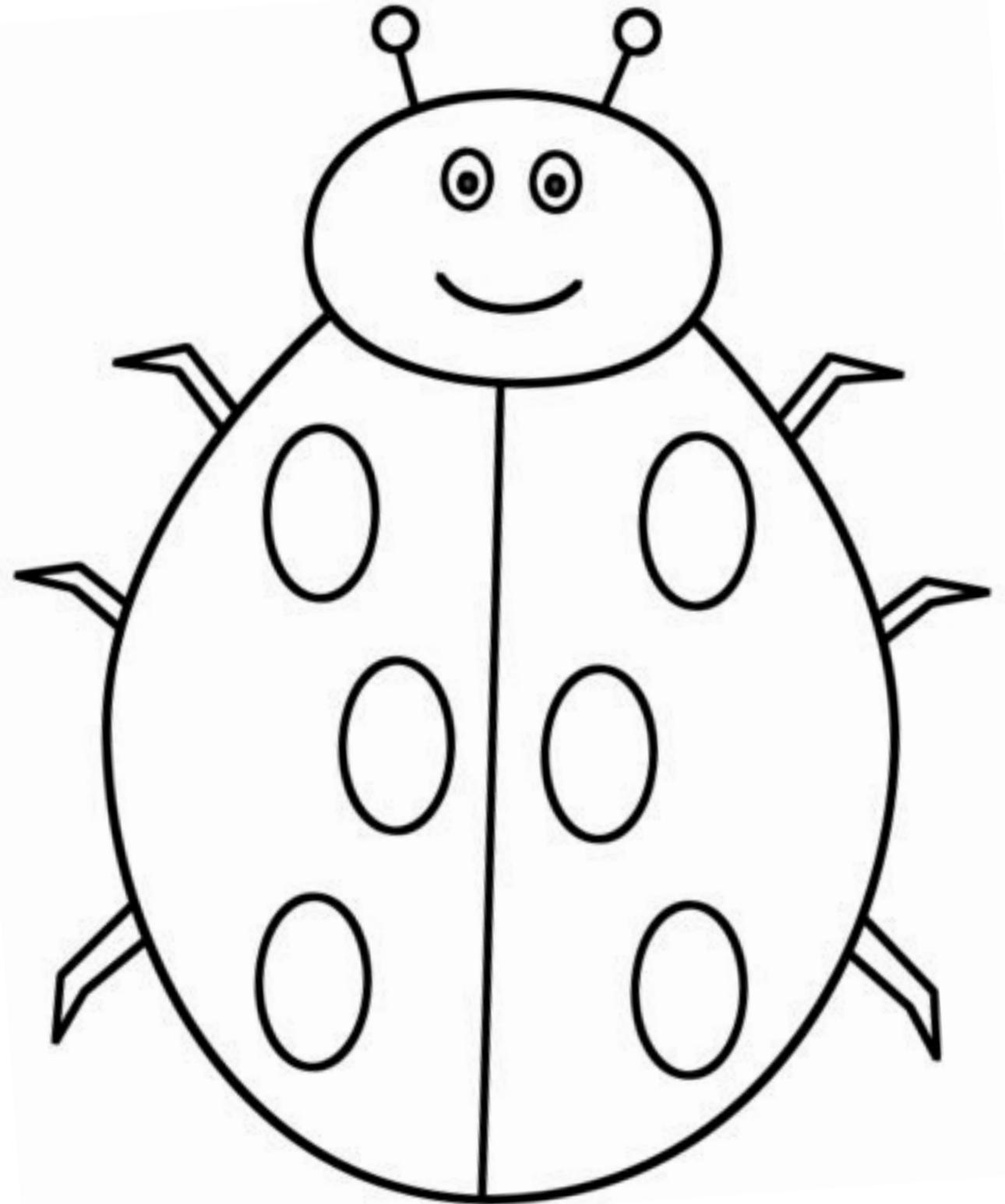
Cut out the Bee's face to make a mask. Make 2 small slits on the sides to tie a piece of string or ribbon to each side so that you can tie it around your head. Use scotch tape to make the holes stronger so they don't tear.

for more info visit: www.KidsGrowingStrong.org

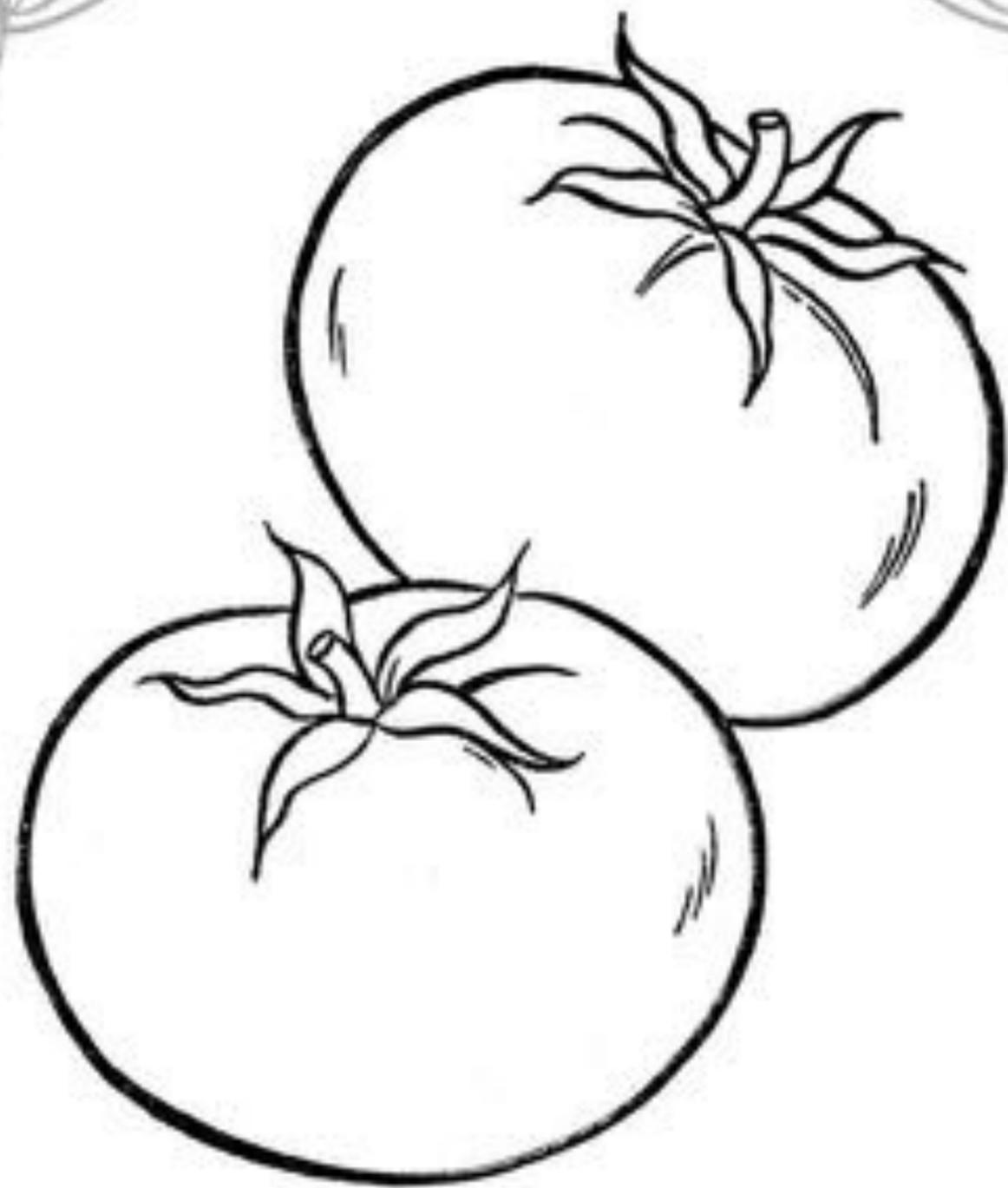
Color the Monarch Butterfly



I am a friend of Ladybugs!

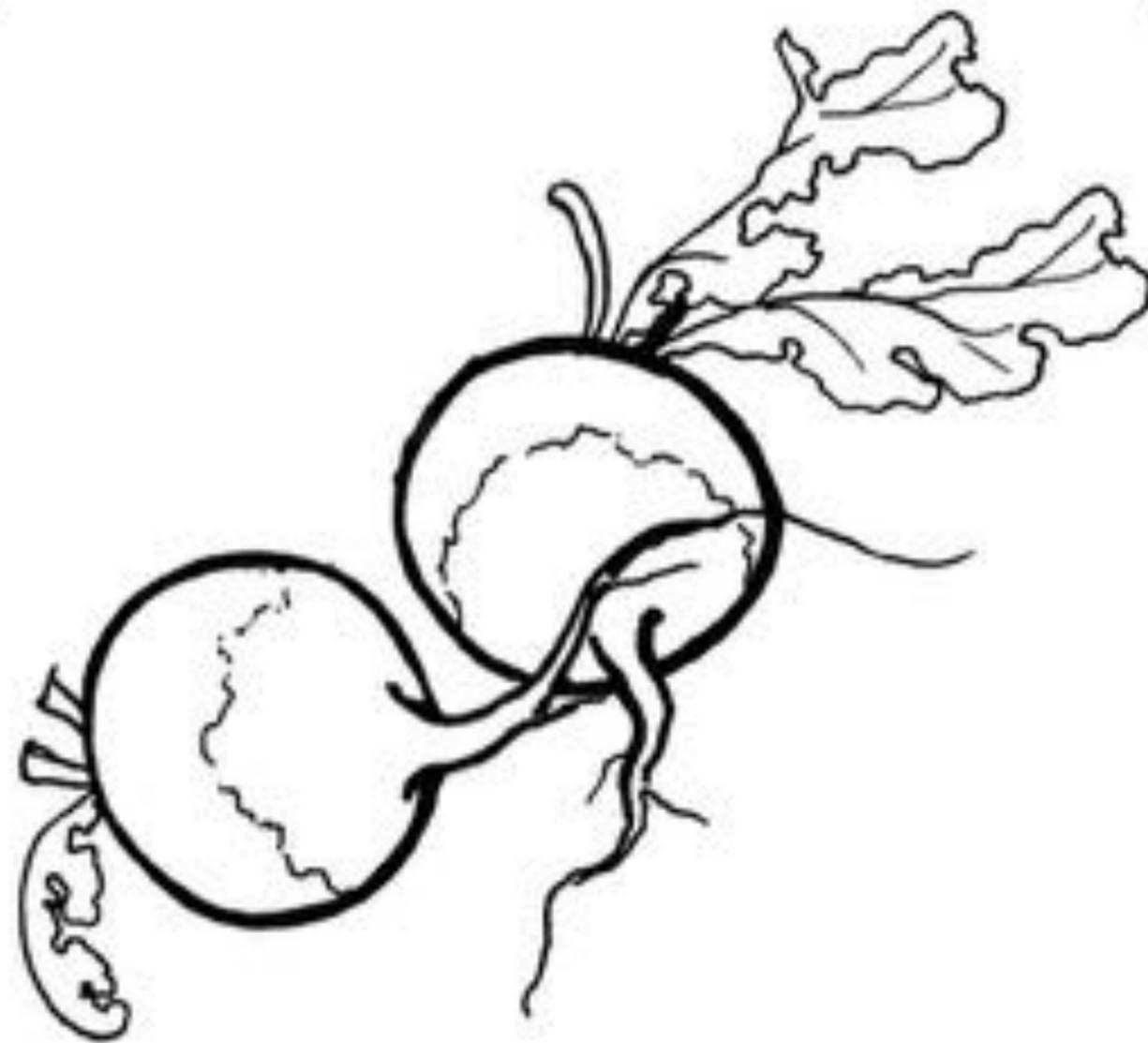


I am a friend of Monarch Butterflies



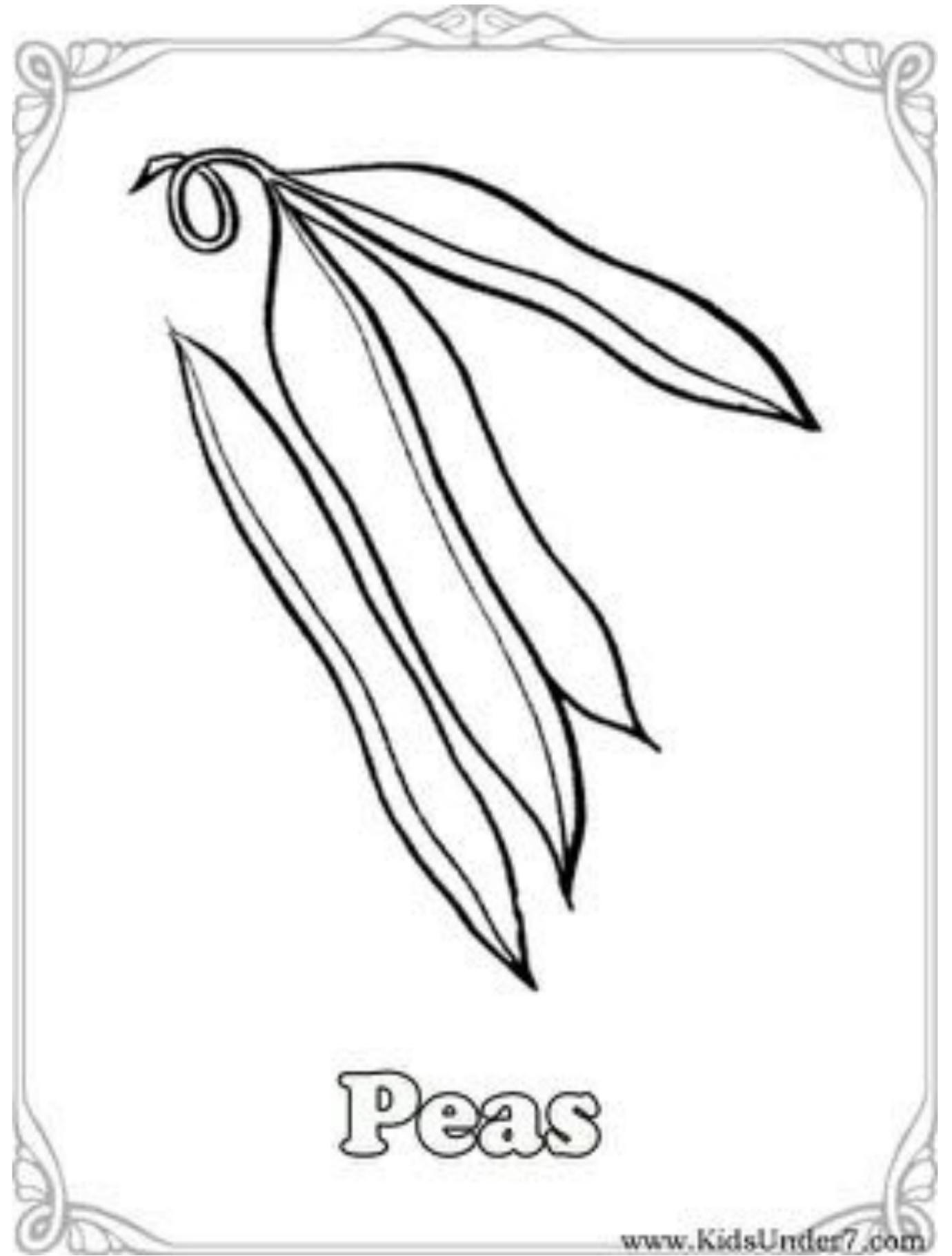
Tomato

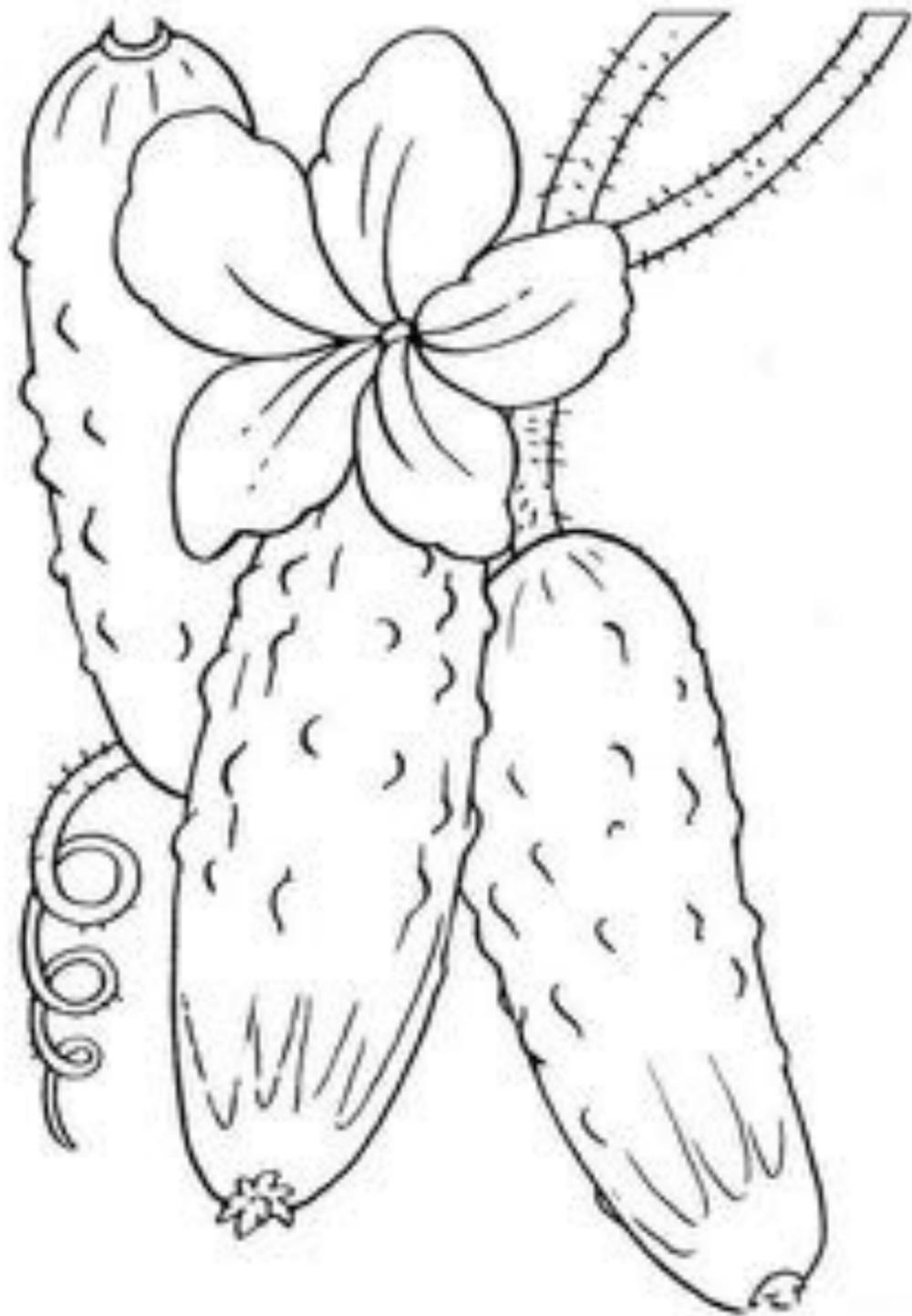
www.KidsUnder7.com



Radish

www.KidsUnder7.com





Cucumber

www.KidsUnder7.com

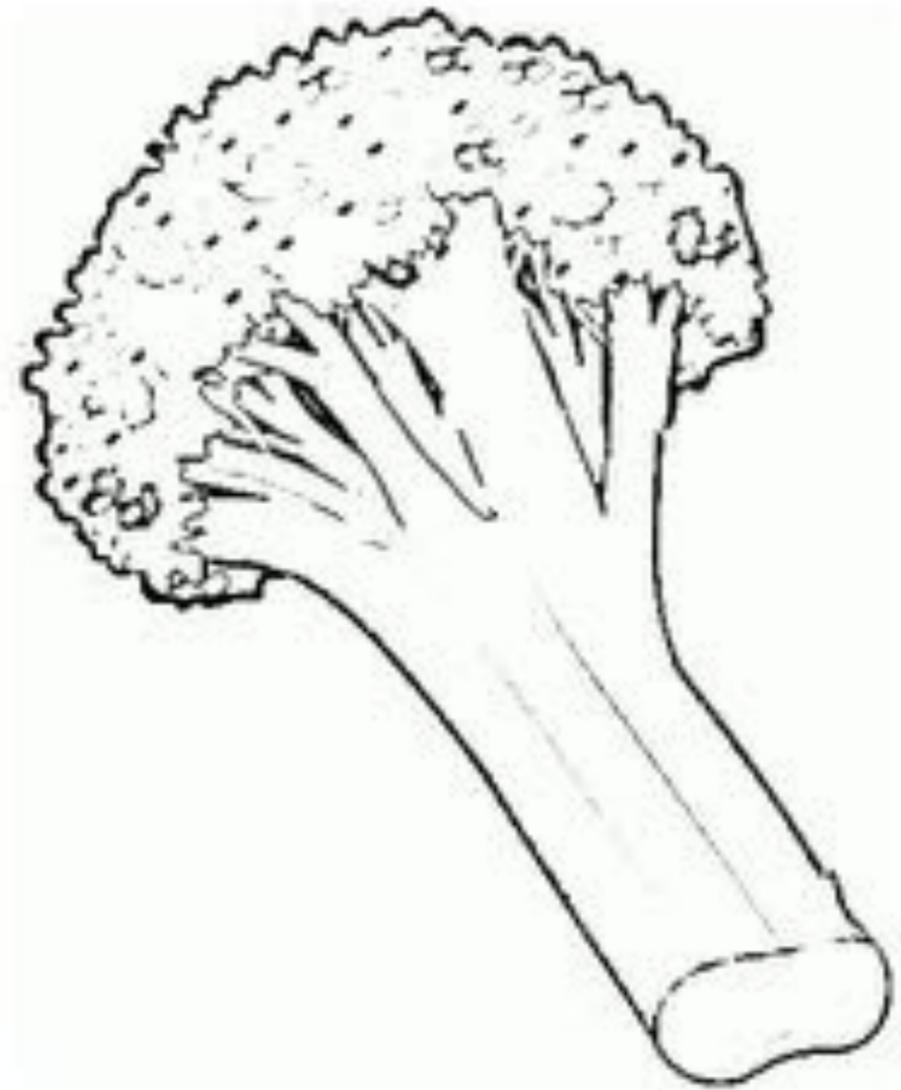


Corn

www.KidsUnder7.com



Carrot



Broccoli

Q & A

WILL SOMEONE TRAIN ME AS A TEACHING VOLUNTEER AND WILL I BE PAIRED WITH SOMEONE WITH EXPERIENCE?

The current group of volunteers are all able to mentor any new volunteers. Our hope is that this manual will help new and returning volunteers with their weekly lessons. There should always be at least one volunteer on hand each week who has been with the program for at least one year. The important qualities for a volunteer are enthusiasm, an ability to nurture and listen, and basic experience in gardening is also helpful.

WHERE DO I FIND THE MATERIALS THAT I NEED FOR EACH CLASS ACTIVITY?

This is an organic program, so you can either follow our lesson plans outlined on page 9 or come up with your own ideas as a group. An example of this is Garden Yoga. We tried this one week and it was such a great success that it became a regular feature of the program. As you add new ideas or activities, please make sure they are recorded so that they can be added to this manual when we do updates. You can also use any of the ideas in the back of this manual and copy the activity sheets as you see fit.

WHERE DO WE GET SEEDS & PLANTS?

Each year, Greenwich Community Gardens sends letters to several organic seed companies to obtain free seeds. They also grow seedlings and gift our program several different varieties of veggies and herbs. Our local nurseries have also been very generous and given us numerous seed packets each year. You can send your own letters to:

Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds www.rareseeds.com

Botanical Interests www.botanicalinterests.com

Fedco www.fedcoseeds.com

High Mowing Seeds www.highmowingseeds.com

Hudson Valley Seeds www.seedlibrary.org

Johnny's Selected Seeds www.johnnyseeds.com (not all their seeds are organic)

Renee's Garden Seeds www.reneesgarden.com (not all their seeds are organic)

Seeds of Change www.seedschange.com

Seed Savers Exchange www.seedsavers.org

Territorial Seeds www.territorialseed.com

WHO APPROVES PURCHASES FOR THE PROGRAM?

The annual budget is created by the Young Sprouts directors and then submitted to Greenwich Community Gardens for approval. For several years, we have also received a generous donation from a family foundation. The Greenwich Garden Club also supports our program through generous annual donations.

DO I NEED TO KEEP TRACK OF MY VOLUNTEER HOURS? WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

The Young Sprouts directors keep a tally of how many volunteers participate each week and estimate extra time spent in preparation and at the garden. This is useful data for annual reporting and when seeking program funding.

HOW DO I FIND OUT IF CLASS HAS BEEN CANCELLED OR WE ARE MOVING INDOORS DUE TO THE WEATHER?

The Young Sprout director(s) are contacted by the Head Start School when bad weather may interrupt our outdoor plans. Look for an email first thing in the morning on class day and plan accordingly. NOTE: CT now has several days a year when the air quality is not suitable for small children to do outdoor activities. We are rarely cancelled, and it is always good to have a backup plan just in case we are suddenly limited to indoor activities.

DO I NEED TO COMMIT TO EVERY WEEK OF THE PROGRAM?

We aim to always have 4 volunteers at the garden each day we teach, but you do not have to be responsible for attending every week of the gardening program. We are aware that we are all volunteers and we do the best we can to be available. Sometimes we have other things in our lives that may need to take precedence. That is understandable. With that said, we are a team and it is important to support each other and make sure that enough people will be on the ground each week to comfortably manage the classes. The director(s) will work out a process for scheduling with the team.

HOW DO I DRESS AND WHAT SHOULD I BRING WITH ME?

Dress very comfortably and expect to get dirty (which means you had a great day!). Please wear **ONLY CLOSED TOE SHOES** and bring your own gloves, hat, sunscreen and a water bottle. Please do not bring single use items to the garden as we are trying to model responsible environmental practices.

Garden Moments

We hope you have enjoyed learning about our Young Sprouts Garden Program as much as we have enjoyed creating this gardening experience over the past several years. It is no small thing to introduce young children to the awe and wonder of the natural world. You will be teaching 3 to 5 year olds the joys of “playing in the dirt” and growing their own food. These are valuable lessons that may influence the rest of their lives. And it’s lots of fun. We have found this project to be gratifying in unexpected ways both large and small and we welcome learning from you and your experiences.

CHERISH THESE MOMENTS AND ENJOY!

