

Welcome to Issue 6 of Growing and Learning Together where our focus this time is Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

STAY ALERT ▶ CONTROL THE VIRUS ▶ SAVE LIVES

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

The Education People is a proud supporter of the United Nation's 17 Global Goals working towards a better future for everyone. In order to succeed, the Global Goals will require everybody's contributions from governments and businesses through to children and their families.

The Global Goals focus on major challenges to a sustainable future, including climate issues, conservation and fairer societies. Introducing children to the ways our actions can impact upon other people and the environment both positively and negatively can offer the first steps in beginning to understand how we can be more sustainable as individuals and communities.

THE GLOBAL GOALS

For Sustainable Development



During this time, you may not be getting out to enjoy nature as much as you would like. So why not bring a little piece of nature indoors?

Growing a plant with your child offers opportunities to discuss and explore nature as well as taking on the responsibility of caring for something.

Before you spend money on gardening equipment and seeds check out our sustainable, money saving ideas below.

Using repurposed materials can be a simple, low cost and environmentally friendly way to grow your own plants indoors on a sunny windowsill, a balcony or in the garden.

We like to find new ways to recycle or repurpose items that might otherwise end up in landfill. Here's a fun way to start seedlings indoors and introduce children to growing plants and vegetables.

Self-watering plastic bottle planter

Why not repurpose a two litre plastic bottle into a self-watering planter for a low maintenance way to grow seeds indoors.

You will need:

- a plastic water bottle without the cap
- a strip of material – an old cotton t-shirt works well
- scissors
- compost
- seeds
- water

How to make your self-watering planter:

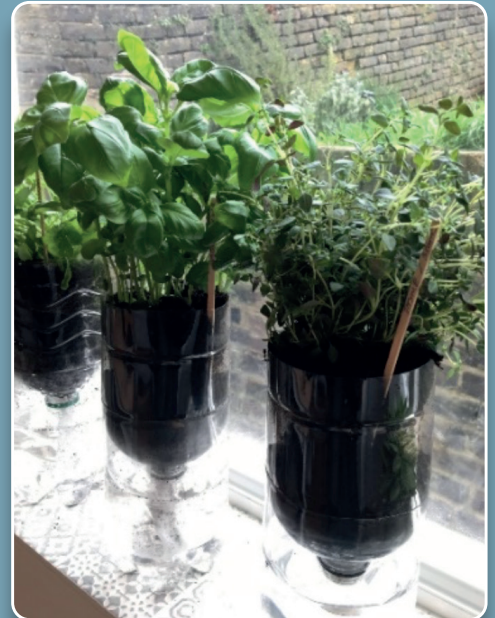
1. An adult will need to carefully make a starter hole and cut the bottle around the middle to give you two halves
2. Make a 'wick' from a strip of material, approximately 15 centimetres long
3. Help your child turn the top of the bottle upside down to make a funnel
4. Add water to the bottom half of the bottle and insert the funnel
5. Place the wick into the funnel making sure it hangs down into the water
6. Now add the compost, plant the seeds and dampen the soil with water
7. Remind your child to top up the water in the bottom half!

As always, do take care when using sharp scissors near children and remember to put them out of reach after use.

Use recycled everyday objects e.g yoghurt pots, food cans etc. to collect rain to water your plants.

If it rains over a few days, you could mark each day's rainfall on the side of the pot with a permanent marker and discuss the amount of rain in the pot in relation to how light or heavy the rainfall is.

This helps children to understand that water is a precious resource and should be used wisely. Rainwater is better for plants than hard tap water and will also save you money on your water meter.



Newspaper seedling pots

Used newspapers can be repurposed into biodegradable seedling pots.

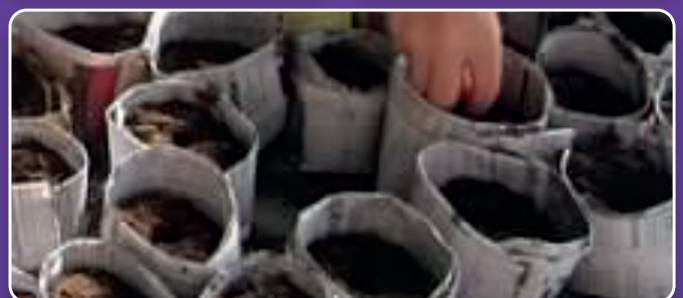
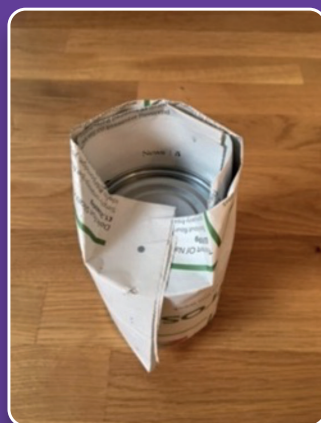
This is a great afternoon activity for the entire family and a wonderful way to introduce children to gardening. With a stack of newspapers, a food can and a few minutes, you'll soon be ready for your children to add potting soil and seeds. As your seedlings grow the biodegradable pots can be planted directly into a bigger container or the garden, as the newspaper will rot away.

You will need:

- newspapers
- a food can (preferably unopened to avoid sharp edges)
- a tray or plate to stand your pots on
- compost
- seeds

How to make your newspaper seedling pot:

1. Help your child roll the newspaper around the can
2. Fold the newspaper towards the bottom of the can
3. Remove the can from inside the newspaper pot
4. Fold in the top edge of the newspaper - this helps to retain the shape
5. Count together the number of scoops required to fill the pot and then plant a seed in each pot
6. Place your newspaper pots on a small tray/plate (to prevent the pots causing damage to surfaces as the newspaper becomes damp with watering)
7. Place on a windowsill or balcony and make a little daily watering ritual with your children.



A glass jar bean house

A very traditional idea which your children will find fascinating...making your own 'bean house' using a clean jar, a piece of kitchen paper or cotton wool, card and a bean.

Remind your children to keep the kitchen paper damp and in a few days your children will be fascinated watching the roots and then the shoots appear from the bean and start to grow.



With our planting theme in mind here are three great ways you can repurpose plastic milk bottles

Please click on the images below for instructions

Watering bottle



Animal planter



Garden scoop



Although adults will have to cut and make holes in the bottles, your children can have fun decorating and using them.

Please take care when cutting or making holes in the bottles. You can add tape to the cut edges if they are sharp

"Nationwide, we use 7.7 billion plastic bottles per year. That's an average of 117 bottles per person per year."

www.recyclingbins.co.uk

Children growing their own food

Engaging your children in growing their own food to eat can:

- Foster their curiosity and wonder of nature
- Introduce them to where food comes from – seasonal produce
- Develop their knowledge of what plants need to grow and thrive – water, sunlight
- Introduce them to the challenges of growing crops
- Enable them to take responsibility for looking after something
- Encourage them to try new foods especially as they have helped to water and care for it
- Involve your child in decision making about what they would like to grow and why.

Suggestions on what to grow

Growing times for seeds differ and you will need to factor in the rate seedlings grow, germination time and how long it will take for the plants to mature.

Easy fruit and vegetables to grow which give quick results are:

French beans, beetroot, courgette, pumpkin, tomato, lettuce, salad leaves and strawberries.

Vegetables that grow without full sun:

Lettuce, peas, swiss chard and spinach.

Encourage your children to only pick plants with an adult's permission and to always wash their hands after gardening.

Why not explore different seeds with your children? Show them where the seeds can be found when you prepare fruit and vegetables.

Are all seeds inside the fruit or vegetable? Some have their seeds on the outside – like strawberries.

How many different types of seeds can you find?

Try planting different seeds and see how they grow

Some seeds will grow faster than others so start with something quick to grow like cress.



Helpful websites for families about growing plants with children

<https://www.edenproject.com/learn/for-everyone>

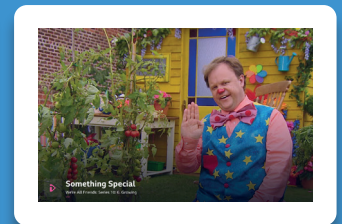
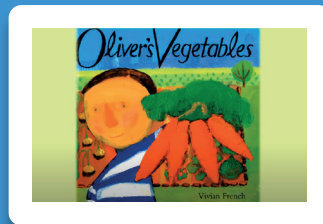
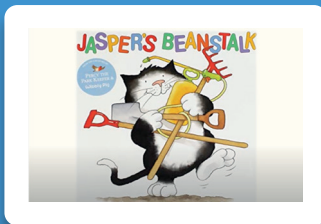
<http://kidsinthegarden.co.uk/plants-for-kids/growing-vegetables-with-children/>

<https://schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk/home>

Creating Special Moments

Cuddle up to your loved ones and share a favourite story and rhyme – and this can be at any time of the day!

After you have finished planting your seeds why not read a couple of stories about growing vegetables and watch Mr Tumble and his friends gardening?



Children learn through play and they learn most from you so make your time together as playful as possible. They will love playing with you and many special memories can be created during this challenging time. Try to create a daily routine for you and your children - include making regular contact with other family members via social media so that children still feel connected to them.

COVID-19: A Letter to Critical Workers on Childcare During the Summer Half Term

Useful information to help explain Coronavirus to your children

Coronavirus explained through a cartoon by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

UNICEF guides to coronavirus for parents and children

If your child is worried or anxious about coronavirus, find professional advice from Parents Helpline experts at Young Minds

This information has been provided by The Education People,
Kent County Council's Education Services Company

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Early Years and Childcare Excellence



Enhancing Family Involvement in Children's Learning

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