

Five Reasons Why Kids Should Garden

by SEASONAL WISDOM on JUNE 16, 2011

1) **Prevents Nature Deficit Disorder:** With so many kids spending time away from nature, we're seeing evidence of a "nature deficit disorder" in many children. As Richard Louv explained in his book, *Last Child in the Woods*, this disconnect from nature is leading some kids to become overweight, anxious, and depressed. Plus, this nature deficit disorder is affecting children's performance in school too. To make sure this doesn't happen to your kids, be sure to unplug the electronic gadgets regularly, and involve your family more in the garden.

2) **Teaches About Nature ... and More:** Maybe it's growing a sunflower from seed. Or, building a bean teepee in the backyard. But when you involve kids in gardening, they learn hands-on skills that broaden their awareness of the world around them. They learn why butterflies and bees help pollinate plants. And why the right amounts of water and sun are needed to get gardens to grow. Along with a greater appreciation for nature, gardens can also teach kids about biology, math, history, nutrition and more.

3) **Gives Them Exercise:** Gardening provides lots of healthy ways for kids to stay active and healthy. Between digging, raking, and planting, your children will get plenty of exercise, vitamin D, and fresh air. Be sure to make your garden chores creative, and mix them up a bit so they stay interesting. With a little patience, you'll find your children will become helpful and fun assistants in the garden.

4) **Encourages Kids To Eat Produce:** Ask any parent with a vegetable garden. The kids that grow up around homegrown vegetables are much more likely to eat them too. Maybe it's because kids enjoy picking fresh beans or tomatoes. Or perhaps it's because fresh fruit and vegetables simply taste better just picked from your yard. But whatever the reason, gardening is an excellent way to help solve the problem that most U.S. children are not eating enough fresh fruit and vegetables. Try it yourself and report the results.

5) **Prepares Them for Life:** There's something magical about gardening. The tiny seeds that grow into healthy, big plants. The birds that swoop down to capture a

juicy worm. The end of the growing season when the plants start to die back for winter. All these lessons can be a wonderful reminder to be patient while things grow, and to keep the faith when some things die away. Besides, as human beings our brains are wired to be out in nature. Perhaps that's why it feels so natural to be out there.

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