

## Experiencing a garden with your children

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Spring is the right time **to teach children about the garden**. You don't need acres of land, and to be honest, **you don't even need a garden: all it takes is a balcony or a shelf by the window**, with a few pots and a handful of seeds or seedlings for you and your children to experience the incredible thrill of watching a plant grow and of tasting the fruits, the results of patient and constant care that you provide together.

### ALL CHILD-SIZED

Wherever you set up your little garden, **the important thing is that it is child-sized**.

The pots must be child-high, and the tools, from a small watering can to the spade for making holes in the ground, must be the right size for its little hands.

Something else that will make the experience successful is providing clothes that can get dirty or an apron to wear when working the ground. And providing a permanent, convenient place in which to store all of the tools when the work is done, even independently.

### WHAT TO PLANT

The plants suitable for a child-sized garden are those that grow easily, that ripen quickly. So, **the most common aromatic plants with their characteristic smells**, which are easy to recognise and to use in everyday cooking, such as rosemary, sage, thyme, basil, parsley and chives, are good.

But **fruit and vegetables also give a great deal of satisfaction**, first of all strawberries, but also cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, courgettes, lettuces and carrots.

What is important is to choose according to the availability of space and time, because there is no point in planting tomatoes if, in August, you go away on holiday, and there is no one to water and pick them.

### WHEN TO PLANT

The month of April is ideal for sowing basil, celery and tomatoes and, until the beginning of the summer, beetroot, carrots, cucumbers, beans, green beans, lettuces, courgettes, chives and parsley can be planted.

### THE FRUITS

In addition to enjoying the harvest, the child develops a sense of responsibility and respect for nature, as it takes care of the garden. It increases its skills and strengthens its self-esteem, learning **the importance of care, patience and waiting**.

di Translated by Alessia Stocco (Reviewed by Prof. Rolf Cook)

