Preparation

1. Get everyone involved right from the very start! Divide up the shopping and preparation tasks between the older and younger generations.

2. Prepare the activity area and put cloth on the tables:
   a) Make sure there’s plenty of space for everyone to sit at the table, in chairs or wheelchairs, and the surface is at the right height.
   b) Keep a dustpan and brush handy to clean up any spills or accidents.
   c) Set out equipment and materials according to group size and who can do what.
   d) Prepare for hand washing/cleansing with a wipe/using gloves as suited to the participants.
   e) Keep a dustpan and brush handy to clean up any right height.

3. Gather other resources that will provide conversation and provoke questions:
   a) Gather down with chocolate and treats.
   b) Keep a dustpan and brush handy to clean up any dirt or grime.
   c) Set out equipment and materials according to group size.
   d) Prepare for hand washing/cleansing with a wipe/using gloves as suited to the participants.

4. Print Garden Organic potato growing resource here. Knowledge and recipes with younger participants can help the older participants to share their food memories. Recipe books and pictures of potato food can provide a hands-on, sensory experience.

Growing potatoes

Everyone loves a potato and has their own favourite way to eat them. They are probably the most versatile and delicious veg we have. Whatever space you have, they are easy to grow and to grow. For older participants, growing potatoes can provide a hands-on, sensory experience. It is grown. Once you have harvested your potatoes, you can go on to do further cooking activities. If you have grown your potatoes, you can go on to do further cooking activities.

Materials and equipment:

- Gloves
- Scoops/trowels
- Re-usable clothes
- Containers at least 30cm deep and wide. You can also use old compost/bin bags, cloth/bags.
- Container at least 30cm deep and wide.
- Re-usable clothes
- Scoops/trowels
- Gloves
Session plan

1. Make everyone comfortable at the table, wearing gloves and plasters if any cuts.

2. Introduce the activity – clearly explaining what is being planted, talk about potatoes and link to relevant cooking and farming activities you’ve done together.

3. **Follow the instructions in the Garden Organic activity handout.**

4. Clear the tables and put everything away.

5. Put the potato containers outside. Check them for growth and water weekly, if possible, with participants. Add more compost every time the leaves start showing until you reach about 5cm from the top edge.

Check the potatoes for growth and water weekly
Generate conversation, and explore sensory experiences

- Look at old photos of potato picking, fields of potatoes, potato forks and ‘spuds’ (a narrow spade used for digging potatoes!)
- Discuss where potatoes come from (Peru), and when introduced (Sir Walter Raleigh & Elizabeth I).
- Talk about how you like to eat potatoes – e.g. fish & chips, Lancashire hotpot, roast potatoes, with mint and butter etc.
- Show some pictures of ugly vegetables!
- Questions you could ask everyone:
  - Have you ever been potato picking?
  - Which type of potato do you like best?
  - Does anyone know any potato songs?
- Have you ever made potato stamps or potato art?
- Questions you could ask older participants:
  - What are some of the old varieties of potatoes called?
  - How has buying potatoes changed over the years?
  - Do you like to buy potatoes clean or dirty?
  - Do potatoes taste better today?

Other ideas for extending opportunities

- Take photos of planting and harvesting
- Create a display together to include potato facts, recipes and jokes
- Do some potato printing together
- Organise a tasting session to try different varieties of potato
- Link up with parents and the older participants’ wider family and friends for a potato growing competition
- Cook up some potato dishes together, or make a potato salad.

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