

Sow and grow at home



At-home activity for little ones

This fantastic activity can be done at home as part of Plant and Share Month. This activity is about growing your own vegetables and learning about different stages of plant growth. There are many different veg to choose from that give you quick results! Each child will need two containers. One for themselves to care and nurture and one to share with somebody else. Use [growing cards](#) to help you.

What You Need:

- Vegetable seeds. For example, 'cut and come again' salad leaves or baby leaf salads, radish, or rocket
- Larger seeds such as peas. Pea shoots may be better for very young children to handle
- [Growing cards](#)
- Container to grow in. For example, a supermarket mushroom container or make a paper pot
- Marker pen and homemade label
- Multipurpose peat-free compost
- A scoop

Introduction

Stories that can be used to introduce this activity are:

- 'The Tiny Seed' by Eric Carle
- 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' by Eric Carles
- 'Oliver's Vegetables' by Alison Bartlett

Discuss your child's favourite things to eat. Many foods we like to eat start out as seeds planted in the soil.

What do plants need to grow? Water, warmth, food, light and time – a bit like us.

Introduce the concept of life cycles.

Some seeds grow very quickly, others need more time.

Tip: When using small seeds like salads, radish or rocket, mix them with dry silver sand for easier sowing.

Larger seeds such as peas for growing as pea shoots may be better for very young children to handle.

What to Do

1. Let your child choose the seeds they want to sow.
2. Give your child two recycled containers (they can be anything from mushroom punnets to old shoes as long as they hold compost and you can put drainage holes in them) or [make your own pots](#) out of scrap paper or old newspapers.
3. Use scoops to fill the containers with multipurpose compost (peat free if possible as it is better for the environment) and gently tap them on the table to get rid of air pockets.
4. Show them how to sprinkle the seeds on the surface, aiming for 2–3cm between the seeds, or sow larger seeds two to a pot. You could make templates of letters or shapes.
5. Cover with compost, a thin layer of 0.5cm for small seeds and to a depth of approximately twice the size of the seed for larger ones.
6. Water gently but well, so the compost is nice and moist.
7. Label each container with the child's homemade label with the veg name, date and child's name.
8. Cover the pot with clear plastic or cling film to keep the compost moist until the seedlings come up. Most take 5–8 days if sown indoors and left on a windowsill.
9. Gently pull out excess seedlings, leaving the rest about 4–5cm apart. You can eat the seedlings you have pulled out.
10. Now is a good time to share one of your containers. Make sure you give the person you are sharing them with instructions on how to grow them on. Make sure you follow local Covid-19 guidelines on social distancing.
11. Grow in a light, airy spot outdoors, or on a cool light windowsill. Keep containers in a light shade in hot weather. They need regular watering if growing in a shallow tray.
12. When the plants are around 8–10cm tall, start harvesting. Pick individual leaves, or cut them off, leaving a short stump of plant. Water well after first pickings to encourage a second harvest.
13. Have a tasting session with your child – do the different colour leaves taste different? Which ones taste the best? What shape are they? How many different colours are there?
14. Finish off the activity by playing some music and ask your child to pretend to be a plant growing: 'A tiny seed was sleeping' is a good song to make up actions to, or play Vivaldi's 'Spring' or Grieg Peer Gynt's 'Morning' or sing 'The Lettuce Man' to the tune of 'The Muffin Man'.
15. Keep a diary and record what happens with pictures, photos and writing. Post pictures on the [Get Togethers Facebook page](#), or on [Twitter](#) using **#FFLGetTogethers!**



Extended Activity

- Look at the parts of a plant. You can build your own plant using raffia as roots, cutting out a green stem, leaves, flowers, pods, fruit and so on from card, and then sticking them on a large piece of paper. Label the different plant parts.



- You could look at different fruit and vegetables to discuss what part of the plant they are and which bits you are eating.
- Use your leaves to make a salad or use in a sandwich.
- Find out how the person you shared your other pot with got on.



Curriculum Links

Communication and language

Listening attentively to the stories and instruction on how to do the seed sowing activity; Show their understanding of the activity by asking questions and answering how and why questions; Have the opportunity to speak during the activity to discuss what they like to eat and show what they have achieved; Role play a plant growing from seed.

Physical development

Moving and handling by developing fine motor skills through the handling of seeds, appropriate tools, and pencils for writing labels; Health and self-care through handwashing after handling compost and seeds.

Personal, social and emotional development

Self-confidence and self-awareness through doing the seeds sowing activity and role playing a seed growing and singing; Choosing the seeds they want to sow and asking for help if they need it. Managing feelings and behaviour through working in teams; Making relationships by working with their friends and following the rules for the activity.

Literacy

Reading the stories along with their teacher and talking about the stories; Writing the labels for the pots and writing in a journal to record what happens to their seeds. Spelling and writing simple words like seed and using words to describe them, writing crop names.

Mathematics

Numbers: Count how many seeds they are planting in each container and use the seeds for adding and subtracting; Shape: Discuss the shape of different seeds and shape of leaves as their plants grow; Space and measures: they compare the weight and size of different seeds; Discuss the spacing between the seeds; Measure their seedlings as they grow and use words like 'taller than' and 'shorter than' and 'more/less'.

Understanding the world

People and communities: Children discuss what they like to eat at home and what vegetables and fruit they like; The world: Children discuss where else they think their seeds might grow and what the seeds need to grow.

Expressive arts and design

Exploring and using media and materials: Children can sing a song at the end of the activity and role play a seed growing; Children can design and make a plant and its parts out of different materials; Children can design a label for their plants. Being imaginative: Children design their own labels and role play a seed growing.