



PENRITH

GREEN SPACES THE SENSORY GARDEN

Ages: 0 to 3

WHAT TO DO

Prepare a low garden bed (low enough for the children to reach, or get into!), or range of pots or containers for planting; soil; straw or mulch; and a range of plants (seeds or seedlings) that smell, taste, feel and sound different.

Select your plants. It is good to use herbs and other edible plants, particularly for infants, so that they are able to taste as well as smell, see and feel. Try to use different plants to give a range of textures. For example sage is soft and furry, rosemary smells great and is hard and leathery, basil is soft and has flowers, chives are thin and have flowers. Nasturtiums and pansies are also great for colour depending on the time of year. Be careful with plants that may attract bees.

Plant the plants in your garden bed or container and let the children get involved. They can dig, poke with their fingers to make holes to plant and water.

Care for your plants and once established the children can explore them. Think about using some of the "flavours" in cooking something simple like pasta and adding basil, and see if the flavour or smell is familiar, add some herbs to play dough.

Pick some herbs and use them or create paths in the garden to create a maze or path to a secret place.



No space for a garden bed?
How about a vertical garden?
This one uses different
succulent plants (no spikes!)





PROVOCATIONS

- I wonder what will grow from these seeds?
- I wonder what we can do to look after the seedlings?
- I wonder what the plant feels/smells/tastes like?
- I wonder if you can hear the sound of the breeze blowing through the leaves?
- I wonder what happens when we scrunch up the leaves?
- I wonder how we can look after the plants?
- I wonder what else grows from a seed?

POSSIBLE LINES OF DEVELOPMENT

- Other things that grow from seeds.
- Bugs in the garden.
- Edible gardens.
- Other interesting things in nature - clouds, leaves, rain, sand, mud, water.
- What else eats/visits these plants.
- Collect seeds to plant next year.
- Use herbs or plants in other ways (cooking, sensory play dough, add to clay, etc).
- Weeding and mulching garden beds.

Adapted from coolastralia.org - sign up free for more Early Learning, Primary and Secondary curriculum resources about science, the environment and sustainability. A Cooling the City resource for Penrith City Council with One Tree Per Child.





PENRITH

GREEN SPACES DESIGN A HABITAT GARDEN

Ages: 3 to 5

WHAT TO DO

Preparation: Gather some clipboards, paper, pencils and crayons; some bird, mammal, reptile and bug identification books, posters, or cards which include things you might find in your local area. Don't forget the magnifying glasses!

Spend time outside observing what sort of creatures visit your outside space. Encourage children to find a quiet comfortable spot where they can sit and observe animals coming and going, encourage them to look up in the trees and down on the ground, around rocks and logs. Look closely, there could be big and small things, birds, lizards, bugs or worms. It will be helpful to have a discussion first about how to observe these creatures safely without hurting them, or putting themselves in danger of stings or bites.

Ask them to observe what the creatures are doing (are they eating,

drinking, lying in the sun, building a nest or burrow, etc).

Ask the children to use the tools provided (posters, cards, books etc.) to identify what they have seen. It may also be interesting to talk about what they didn't see, that they thought they might.

Talk about what the creatures were doing while they were observing and think about why they might have been doing that. Then discuss with the children what they think the creature's needs might be based on what they observe (shape of their beak, type of teeth, where they live, what they eat).

These questions will build a picture of the habitat requirements of their creature. This might be good to do in small groups, particularly if a number of children have observed the same creature.



GET THEM TO THINK ABOUT THE FOLLOWING

- What does my creature eat? (nectar, bugs, leaves, etc.)
- Where does it live? (in the ground, under rocks, in trees, in bushes, etc)
- What does it make its home in? (nest, burrow, tree hollow, etc.)
- What does it need to be happy and healthy? (shade, water, food, protection from predators, etc)
- What might it do for fun?

Once they have come up with some answers to these questions, ask them to use some materials from the garden or craft area to create a place for their creature that meets all of the needs they identified. This may be a drawing, a model, a small habitat outside in a pot or garden bed. They could then take a picture of their creations.





PROVOCATIONS

- I wonder what creatures we can find outside?
- I wonder what we need to do to make sure we find some creatures?
- I wonder what we need to do to make sure we are safe and the creatures are safe?
- I wonder what they eat?
- I wonder where they live?
- I wonder where it makes its home?
- I wonder what it needs to be happy?
- I wonder if it has any predators?
- I wonder what tricks it uses to keep safe?
- I wonder if there are creatures that live here that we didn't see. Why didn't we see them?

POSSIBLE LINES OF DEVELOPMENT

- Build a habitat garden for a type of creature you would like to attract to your outside space (provide plants that birds and animals use for food and shelter rather than feed them).
- Build some nest boxes or a bird bath.
- Camouflage
- Prey and predators.



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