



Garden to Classroom Activity List

Planning a Dream Garden

This activity works well towards the end of winter when you might start thinking about your upcoming garden.

1. Start the conversation about what the plants are doing right now. Many are dead, others are 'sleeping', and some may be already starting to wake up, like maple trees.
2. Now is a good time to plan for what a school or home garden could look like.
3. You can offer seed catalogues (free from Burpee and other seed supplies if you sign up for their mailings), gardening magazines or even calendars for collages, or just offer drawing materials. If you have an existing garden, you may give the children a template of the space (such as number and location of planters/raised beds), or you can make it completely open ended.
4. Allow the children to cut and paste, or draw, what they'd want the garden to look like.
5. Have them share as a class, post them on the walls, and have discussions about the different plants children listed. Are they familiar with them all? What things reflect foods children bring for lunch? Are there any plants that some children haven't seen or taste before (maybe you could bring one in!)
6. You can also let this inform your decisions about what kinds of seeds or seedlings you might want to grow.

Food Memory Activity

This activity only needs drawing materials and a sheet of paper. It's a great opportunity to practice self-portraits with kids, in addition to talking about the memories associated with food in our lives. You'd probably be most successful doing this in small groups of 2-3 at a time with a teacher.

1. Holding the paper so the long edges are at the top and bottom (landscape orientation), fold each side in so that they meet in the middle.
2. Keeping them folded, take the inner edge of each fold, and fold each one back so that it meets the outer edge of the fold.
3. Now, turn the paper so your folds are at the top and bottom of the page (portrait orientation) and draw your face so that it overlaps the folds.
4. Pull open your "mouth" fold & write or draw a food that has a strong memory for you.
5. Pull open your "head" fold & write a word or sentence about that memory. You'll likely have to have the children tell you words to write down.
6. You can share these during meeting time, or just post them and let conversations occur naturally.

Mystery Objects

A mystery object can be something you see/hear/find with the class, something a student observes at home, or something the teacher found. If the mystery is a living thing which would suffer from being handled/brought indoors, you can take a photo of it!

- a. Introduce the mystery object. Give some background such as where it was found, what time of day, etc.
- b. Encourage the children to make observations ONLY (no predictions of what it is). If possible, pass the item around so they can feel it and explore with their senses.
- c. Next, allow the children to ask questions. Open ended ones work best (and not "is it a?") You can model some questions of your own.
- d. Be sure to write down the children's questions and observations!
- e. Talk with the children about what you can do to learn more. Can you look for books? Ask someone else? Can you take one of your questions and try to answer it - such as, What is inside it? or, Does it float?
- f. Whether or not you get an answer isn't as important as encouraging observations, asking questions, and experimenting to learn more.

Nature Circles

This can be done at any time, either pre-planned with gathered materials or just in a natural spot.

- Having photos or reference books can help inspire children or give ideas if they are already interested.
- Take advantage of unexpected findings
 - a bush or tree that's dropped tons of multi-colored leaves
 - a source of smooth rocks
 - the children are collecting flower petals
- Try starting your own mandala near them and see if their curiosity is piqued.

Reflection: What elements besides colors are contributing to this art installation? What is the significance of the temporary nature of this type of art?

Bee Game

Talk about the Bee Community and how each bee has a job. Together all the bees help ensure the success of the hive. If one job doesn't get done, the whole hive fails.

- Start simply (for younger children)
 - a. Assign 1-2 scout bees who have to go out to find a 'flower'.
 - b. When they find one, they should return to the rest of the class and do a 'waggle' dance, shaking their behind while they move in a circle or figure-8 shape.
 - c. The scout bees can then guide the rest of the bees to the flowers they found and
 - d. everyone collects 1 piece of pollen to bring back to the hive.
- For older children you can assign more roles.
 - 1 Queen - stays in the hive making eggs (bingo marker on paper),
 - Guard bees - won't let in anyone who isn't from the hive,
 - Scout bees - collect the pollen/nectar and bring it to the hive,
 - Worker bees -tend the baby bees and make the honey comb (can make 'comb' with play dough or pipe cleaners, can feed 'baby bee' larva empty jars of honey), and
 - Drones - flying around outside the hive doing nothing and having fun.
- Pollination challenge: you can also have multiple flowers set up each with a cup of differently colored pompoms.
 - a. All the bees fly from one flower to another,
 - b. pick up one piece of pollen and put it on another flower, then

- c. take one piece of pollen from that flower and visiting another.
- d. When you are done, show everyone how all of the flowers now have a mix of colored pompoms. That's how a flower gets pollinated!

Reflection: How is bee society like human communities? How is it different?

Magic Wool

Felting with children can be done in a variety of ways based on the ages and skills of your students. Here are some fun options!

- Felt balls. All you need is some nice clean wool and bowls of warm soapy water (dish soap is best). The children get their hunks of clean wool nice and wet with the soapy water. They can then roll the ball in their hands or pass the ball back and forth, hand to hand. As it dries, it should felt together but if it isn't sticking together, have them dip again.
- 'Magic wool'. Have the child lay out some wool onto a piece of felt and slide it into a zip lock bag. Pour in some warm soapy water and zip it closed. Let the children agitate it, by rubbing their knuckles or pressing their fingers over the bag. The more they work it, the better it'll be. Once they are done, remove the bags and let air dry.
- You can also do a giant version with a large piece of felt. Children can lay out pieces of wool and felt onto it. With a large towel under the felt, pour warm soapy water over the felt. Lay a large piece of bubble wrap over the felt, and another large thick towel. Allow children (shoes off!) to stomp on the towel. When you're done, roll up the whole towel, felt, wrap, towel, and have the kids step along the roll to squeeze out the extra water. Roll it back out and let it air dry.