



# Barefoot Books

## KIDS' GARDEN MINI ACTIVITY PACK

Whether they are small indoor containers or expansive outdoor spaces, gardens are full of mysteries to be solved. All of these outdoor activities are designed to work in any kind of garden space: a public or school garden, a garden of your own, or even a container filled with soil. Let's dig in!

### Garden Treasure Quest:

What kinds of treasures might be out in the garden, just waiting to be found? Let's see what we can discover by slowing down and using our senses as we embark upon a quest to find every treasure on our list!

**20 minutes Any Season Outdoor**



### Compost Cake:

Compost is the garden's recycling station. Food scraps and garden trimmings go in, then healthy compost to nourish plants comes out. Starting a new compost pile can be a big job, but the reward is tremendous.

**1 hour Any Season Outdoor**



### Sock Garden:

Did you know that seeds can travel? Some fly in the wind, others travel in the guts of animals that eat them, and some hitchhike on animals that pass by. They even latch onto your socks when you walk through a meadow. Let's plant them and see what grows!

**1 hour Summer/Autumn Outdoor**



### Seed Spheres:

Do you wish you could encourage more helpful local insects in your garden? Local insects love native flowers! Let's make Seed Spheres, or balls full of soil and native flower seeds, to scatter and grow in the garden when the time is right.

**45 minutes Spring Outdoor**



# Garden Treasure Quest

1. Head out into the garden and see how many of these objects you can discover! When you find an object from the Garden Treasure Quest List below, you can add it to your collection and then continue searching for the other objects until you've found them all.

## LET'S GATHER:

- copy of the Garden Treasure Quest List
- basket, bowl or bucket

## GARDEN TREASURE QUEST LIST:

- Something that smells sweet
- Something sparkly
- A seed
- A flower with 8 or more petals
- A soft or fuzzy leaf
- Evidence of an animal visitor in the garden, such as a chewed leaf, a feather, a slime trail or an animal track
- A leaf that isn't green
- Something interesting that is found underground
- Something that could be used to build a bird's nest
- Something you think is beautiful



## Tip

2. Once you've found all of the objects, show them to someone who wasn't on the Treasure Quest with you! Then you can decide if you want to keep your collection of treasures or return them to the garden.

Gather a group of friends or family and make this Treasure Quest a game. The first pair to find all of the objects wins!

# Compost Cake

1. Clear a flat area in the garden about 2.5 ft (1 m) square. Spread the bundle of small branches onto the square.
2. Add a layer of browns on top of the branches, about 6 in (15 cm) high. Sprinkle with water until the pile is damp.
3. Add a layer of greens on top of the browns, about the same height. Sprinkle again.
4. Add a 1 - 1.2 in (2.5 cm) layer of soil. Sprinkle again.
5. Repeat the layering until almost all of your materials are used and your pile is 5 ft (1.5 m) tall and moist like a damp sponge. Save a small amount of browns.
6. Cover your pile on all sides with a thin layer of browns. Use a fork to pull outwards on the top corners so that it looks like a big nest.
7. Water your pile when the weather is dry and cover it when it rains heavily, so it stays damp.
8. Let the decomposers do their work. In about 4 - 6 months, you should have a pile of fresh compost. Sift the finished compost through the wire screen and add it to your garden beds.

## LET'S GATHER:

- spade or fork
- tape measure
- bundle of small branches
- wheelbarrow of "browns," such as dried leaves or straw
- wheelbarrow of "greens," such as fruit and vegetable kitchen scraps, crop leftovers or grass clippings
- small bucket of soil from the garden
- 30 in x 30 in (75 cm x 75 cm) square of heavy gauge wire screen (for an adult helper)



# Sock Garden

1. Find an open meadow with lots of grasses and other plants that you can walk through.
2. Put a pair of old socks on over your shoes. Make sure your legs and arms are covered to avoid tick bites.
3. Walk through the meadow, letting your socks brush against lots of different plants.
4. Check your socks for seeds. Once you have quite a few seeds stuck to your socks, take the socks off carefully, leaving the seeds attached. Head home. To stay safe, ask an adult to check for any ticks.
5. Look closely at your seeds, using a magnifying glass if you have one. Can you see how they attached to your socks? Are they sticky? Do they have small hooks?
6. Draw pictures of some of the seeds before planting them so that you can remember what they looked like.
7. Fill a pot with compost about 2 in (5 cm) from the top of the pot, leaving room for the sock.

## LET'S GATHER:

- old pair of socks large enough to put on over your shoes
  - magnifying glass (optional)
  - paper and pencil
  - pot
  - finished, finely sifted compost to fill the pot
8. Lay the sock on top of the compost and cover with another 1.5 in (4 cm) of compost.
  9. Water the seeds and see what grows.



## Tip

Let the plants grow until they produce their own seeds, then see if you can match your seed pictures to the plants that grow!

# Seed Spheres

1. Using a trowel, put a few scoops of soil into your bowl or bucket.
2. Add water until your soil turns into mud with the texture of clay. If it's too dry, add more water. If it's too watery, add more soil. You'll know it's ready when you can sculpt it in your hands.
3. Sprinkle your seeds into the mud and mix it all together.
4. Roll small balls of the seedy mud in your hands. Make each about the size of a golf ball.
5. Line a baking sheet with newspaper, placing your Seed Spheres on top. Put them in the sun to dry.
6. Clear a place in your garden where you'd like to sow your Seed Spheres. Make sure you choose a spot that gets plenty of sun.
7. Once your Seed Spheres are dry, simply toss them out over your cleared patch of earth.
8. Water regularly and watch to see what grows!

## LET'S GATHER:

- trowel
- bucket of soil
- bowl or bucket
- watering can
- packet of native flower seeds or any seeds that can be scattered
- baking sheet
- newspaper



## Tip

You may need to be patient – some seeds can take a while to start growing!