

## 5 Excellent Plants to Grow With Kids & An Object Lesson!

Growing a garden, or even just a few plants, with children makes the spring come alive in ways few other things do. Gardens are also wonderful Earth Day projects! Children love to watch the plants sprout, grow, and flower, but they can become anxious if nothing changes for a couple weeks. Here are five plants that grow and change quickly, making them educational and loads of fun!

Make sure you read all the way to the end for a great character development object lesson from your garden!

### #1: Garlic:

Cloves of garlic will sprout if you leave them in your fridge or pantry too long. Plant the clove such that the green sprout is just exposed to sunlight. In about a week, the garlic plant can grow several inches! Garlic does great in full sun or partial shade. You can snip the green part off to give a mild garlic flavor to stirfrys and other meals!

### #2: Oregano:

Oregano is easy to plant because many nurseries and grocery stores sell young starts in Earth-friendly containers. It does best with 4-6 hours of direct, bright sunlight. Children love snipping bits of it off and adding it in to spaghetti, lasagna, other pastas, stirfrys, and more!

### #3: Squash:

Yellow squash and zucchini plants do best with at least 5 hours of bright, direct sunlight and lots of water. It is easy to find little packs of 4-6 starts for under \$2.00 in the Spring. Kids love to pinch out the starts and bury them in small holes. They also love how fast the flowers show up...usually only a couple weeks! During that time, they can watch the leaves grow and the plant quickly take up lots of space.

### #4: Flowers:

Some flowers are better for children than others. Alyssum and marigolds both come in a variety of colors and tend to make lots of flowers...which your sweet children will love to pick and bring to you! It is almost too hot in Houston for alyssum now, but marigolds will thrive all summer long. If you do not remove the dead-heads, marigolds will also re-plant themselves!

I saved one of the best for last! Peas grow quickly and are amazing in so many ways. The seeds are big enough that your kids' small hands can still work with them easily. They love bright sunshine, but will still grow if they only get five (or so) hours of direct light. The tall peas in this picture were planted from seed only three weeks earlier. If you look closely, you can see a shorter row of peas that are only two weeks old. Peas need string or a trellis to grow up. If you look closely, you can see their small tendrils wrapping around the string and other plants. This leads to one of my favorite gardening object lessons.

Peas can help each other grow. Look at the picture below...they're holding hands! As the pea plants lift each other, they strengthen themselves too! Let's encourage our children to help each other and be good friends...as they do so, they themselves will become better people too!