

# Garden Discoveries

Your garden may be outside your home, you might have a lawn or a verandah. Perhaps an indoor plant, or maybe there are trees growing on your street. Plants and gardens are continually changing. Look carefully and you'll discover something new every time.

## How to Do It

With your child, choose one plant in your garden. Take a good look from a distance. What do you notice? Describe its shape, colour, how it moves and sounds in the wind. Take notice of the time of day, the light, the season and think about why things might be a certain way based on when you visit your plant.

Record what you notice with words, drawings, painting, photographs or collage. Try a range of different media to encourage your child to express their thinking in new ways.

Visit your plant again. This time take a look from up close. What do you notice this time? Are there details you didn't see from a distance?

Again, record what you notice. Perhaps you may take a close-up photo or try a leaf rubbing.

Visit your plant again. This time look from another direction. Perhaps you might lie on the ground below your plant and look up through the leaves.

Think about how you might record what you notice this time. You might repeat a technique or experiment with other materials.

Visit your plant again. Does another time of day or different weather lead you to notice something new?

Every time you view your plant in a different way, or experiment with different techniques to record what you have noticed, you will discover something new. Perhaps you will build a whole collection of works representing your growing knowledge.

## What Learning is Occurring?

- **Cognitive learning** – developing a range of skills in researching and investigating
- **Language and communication** developing a rich expressive vocabulary. Expressing ideas through a range of media.
- Early **literacy** and **numeracy** - Gaining confidence in increasingly complex mark making as a foundation for literacy.
- Respect for the **environment** – through developing a deeper understanding a plant through changes in seasons.

## Age Considerations

- **Baby:** a walk outside with your baby is so good for your whole family. While you are out, offer your baby things from nature to hold and touch. Look for plants like herbs that are safe to taste.
- **Toddler:** Build a growing vocabulary, talk about plant names, textures and colours. Use descriptive terms to talk about what you and your child are noticing and doing.
- **Preschool:** Extend vocabulary, discover the names of plant parts and many words to describe texture and colour. Experiment with different mark making materials. How does using a pen or a fine paint brush offer different possibilities for expression?
- **Transition to school:** Extend literacy learning – record your visits on a calendar or have a parent or older sibling help write your growing list of words to describe your plant. Find ways to encourage numeracy, graph growth of the plant, count the leaves, record the weather etc.

## Things you will need

- One special plant to visit
- A camera
- A notebook or paper
- Art Materials - Pens, pencils, oil pastels, paint, coloured paper scraps, fabric scraps, glue

## Tips

- Take a camera with you and take some snaps of your discoveries. These photos could be used at home to reference as you draw, paint, or create a collage.
- Take an old towel to lie on if the ground is damp or muddy and you want to view your plant from below.
- If you have a magnifying glass, this offers another different perspective.
- Identify the plant if you can and check it's non-toxic.

