

Gardening with children tips

Now it is spring, lots of us are desperate to get out in the garden, to get it ready for summer, do some planting, weeding and general tidy up.



Gardening with children

When you have children, it can be difficult to manage the gardening. When kids are very little, it can be a very unsafe place for them to be. They often eat everything in sight and you can't take your eyes off them for a minute, so nothing gets done. Then, when they get a bit bigger, they want to help all the time. That's great and to be encouraged, but, most of the time they just get in the way and often undo everything you have just done! Very frustrating!

Here are a few suggestions for gardening with children

1. **Playpen** - When children are very small, you could bring a playpen outside or travel cot with lots of toys for them to play with for a short time. Give them some different objects from around the house to play with too, so it is more interesting than toys they see frequently. Maybe some Tupperware and wooden spoon to make drums?
2. **Garden in short bursts** - Small children need to learn to play alone. It is very good to teach them to amuse themselves. This is when you can do some gardening, but whilst they are little they have a short attention span, so gardening in short bursts is a good idea.
3. **Jobs** - Once children are walking, try to find them a job they can do that doesn't get in your way, like sweeping or cleaning their toys/playhouse.

4. **Older jobs** - Then comes the stage when children want to truly help. At this point, you need to find them a proper job for them to help with, such as digging, pruning with their child scissors, watering plants, collecting weeds etc.
5. **Teach** - Use this chance to teach your children about the garden, planting seeds, the wildlife, the flowers. Children often respond well to listening to the information you give them.
6. **Garden patch** - Give children their own patch of garden to work on, dig and have fun with, this will probably keep them amused for hours!
7. **Bug hunt** - Encourage the children to look for bugs. Let them investigate the garden, give them a magnifying glass to go round looking for worms, ladybirds and whatever bugs they can find. My children love going on a bug hunt!
8. **Play equipment** - Make sure you have lots of outdoor play equipment to encourage children to play for a bit, e.g. scooters, slides, swing, climbing frame, balls.

Last weekend, we were out in the garden, preparing for the summer. We had to dig out a tree root and a new border, spray the fence and plant seeds. My children as always were desperate to help, so they helped us dig out the border. This then inspired a massive worm hunt for them. They spent most of the rest of the day looking for the biggest worms they could find!

They also played on the climbing frame, in their playhouse, on their swing and rode up and down the patio on their trikes, ride ons and scooters. I think with a lot of small children, variety is often the best thing to keep them amused and not getting in the way. They loved helping us for a while and we loved spending the time with them, then they went off and played, perfect for mummy and daddy,

fun for the ch...



How do you manage to garden with children about?