



Activity: *Cooking With Nature*

Imaginative play can be a lot of fun for all who are involved. Why not cook with nature? With your child, enjoy creating mud pies or stone soup as a delicious treat. Use baking trays, bowls, spoons, and other kitchen utensils to make recipes from items found outdoors.

Need a recipe? Try “Stone Soup”. An easy recipe to make using a pot or bucket, water, and stones. Mix stones, a bit of water, and other nature items to enjoy. End the activity with a great “feast” where your child can enjoy their creations with you or others. Read [Stone Soup](#) by Jon J Muth, to encourage your child to create their very own stone soup!

Plant of the Month: *Lamb’s Ear (Stachys byzantina)*

Grown for its soft, fuzzy foliage, Lamb’s Ear is a wonderful addition to your garden, and can even be grown in container pots! Originally from Iran, this perennial plant provides excellent ground-cover; producing bright purple or pink flowers in mid-summer. In addition to being an attractive plant, the soft leaves also provide a great sensory experience for children, helping to develop children’s appreciation for plant diversity.

Recipe: *Watermelon Agua Fresca*

Ingredients

- 4 cups cold, chopped seedless watermelon
- 1 cup cold water
- 1 tablespoon fresh squeezed lemon or lime juice
- 1 1/2 tablespoon honey
- fresh mint leaves (optional)

Instructions

- Put the watermelon pieces, water, lime or lemon juice, mint, and honey into a blender.
- Blend ingredients until the mixture is smooth.
- Serve right away or cover and refrigerate up to 4 hours. Make sure to stir before serving.
- Enjoy!