



Activity: *Insect Safari*

Spring is here and what a great time to explore the life in your garden! Now is the time to go on an insect safari around your backyard. Talk to your child about the benefits of pollination and how insects contribute greatly to the health of the garden. Have them learn, and identify insects outdoors. To celebrate the spring season, have a safari party to learn more about plants, pollinators, and other insects. Encourage them to act out their favorite insect or pollinator.

Pollinators are responsible for assisting over 80% of the world's flowering plants. Without them, humans and wildlife wouldn't have much to eat or look at! Animals that assist plants in their reproduction as pollinators include species of ants, bats, bees, beetles, birds, butterflies, flies, and moths. Wind and water also play a role in the pollination of many plants.

Plant of the Month: *Potato (Solanum tuberosum)*

A warm-season crop, potatoes are one of the leading vegetables in the United States. A tuberous crop grown from the perennial plant *Solanum tuberosum*, they contribute about 15 percent of farm sales for vegetables. According to North Carolina Potato Association, North Carolina alone produces approximately 16,000 acres of potatoes, most notably in the coastal plain counties of Camden, Hyde, Pamlico, and Washington to name a few. April is the perfect time to plant potatoes so you can have a bountiful harvest in late summer!

Recipe: *Garlic Mashed Potatoes*

Ingredients-

8 Potatoes, peeled and quartered

½ cup Milk

Pinch of pepper (optional)

2 Garlic cloves, minced

¼ cup Butter

Salt to taste

Instructions-

- Boil potatoes in a large pan, until they become soft but firm.
- Drain the water and let them cool.
- Add milk, butter, garlic cloves, salt, and pepper to the potatoes and mash them using a masher or an electric mixer.
- Mash it to your desired consistency.
- Serve and Enjoy!