
POD Wake Co Newsletter- May 2018

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Natural Learning Initiative: POD Wake Co Newsletter- May 2018



Childcare Fruit & Vegetable: Introduction



Gardening with children provides numerous opportunities for hands-on learning, inquiry, observation, and experimentation. Gardening also helps children build an understanding of and respect for nature and the environment. When children participate in growing edible plants, they are more motivated to taste, eat, and enjoy fruits and vegetables. So how can you achieve this? Create an edible garden!

"What do I need to keep in mind?"

1. **Location**- Place the garden in a sunny space, not too far from the building or water source. Fruits and vegetables need at least 6 hours of sun a day to be successful.
2. **Layout**- Identify the size and dimension of the garden beds. Keep beds narrow with ample space between each bed to provide children easy access to help with planting and harvesting in the garden. Standard size for beds is 4 feet x 8 feet, and they should be no wider than 3 feet along a fence (if it can only be reached from 1 side).
3. **Construction**- Determine if you would like in-ground beds or raised beds in your outdoor learning environment. Raised beds are often preferred in a childcare setting because they provide easy access for both children and teachers, and provide plant protection for the plants. In-ground beds are low costing, but they require greater investment of time in soil preparation and long-term management.
4. **Planting**- Maximize the garden by making it a learning opportunity for children. Consider growing a spring, summer and fall garden to promote healthy eating and fun activities throughout the year.

Resources:

- [Creating Childcare Center Production Gardens](#)
- [Children's Vegetable Garden: Introduction](#)
- [Early Spring in the Garden](#)

Tips: Want to start off slow? Create [edible container pots](#) to start your new garden. Place them in locations where you plan to build your garden in the future.

Early Childhood Outdoor Learning Environments Certificate Course- Summer 2018



Summer registration for the Early Childhood Outdoor Learning Environments certificate course will be opening soon! Check our website for updates and news about the course.

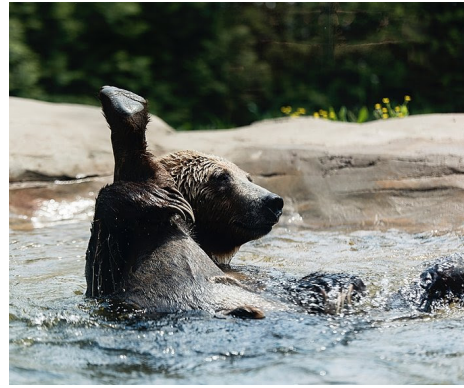
May Activity

Animal and Nature Yoga

Yoga is a great exercise and a fun way for children to enhance their physical development! For this activity provide children the option to do either animal or nature yoga. Encourage children to make be independent thinkers by choosing



different poses to do during the activity.



[Need ideas for yoga poses?](#)

Animal yoga poses can include cat, cow, downward dog, as well as lizard.

Nature yoga poses can include mountain, tree, butterfly, and sun salutations for example.

Need a children's book about yoga and nature? Check out [Rachel's day in the Garden.](#)

Plant of the Month

Watermelon

A warm-season crop, watermelon is from the Cucurbitaceae (or Gourd) family. Native to Africa, watermelons has been cultivated for at least 4,000 years. According to [North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services](#), North Carolina is ranked 8th in the nation, producing over 180 million pounds of watermelon each year.

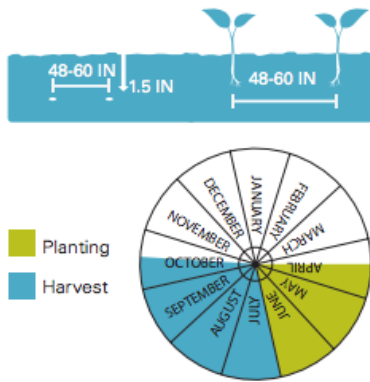


To learn more about watermelon...

[Click Here](#)

Planting Watermelons

A fun way for kids to understand how watermelons grow is to plant them in their school garden. Have children plant from a direct seed 1 1/2 inches deep. Place seeds or transplants 48 to 60 inches apart once the danger of frost has passed, mid April to June. Vines will need a lot of space and spread up to 10 feet.



Tips: Place a board or piece of plastic under watermelons as they develop to prevent insects from boring into the fruit. One or two vines should provide plenty of fruit for a class. For more information check out our [Childcare Production Garden Series](#) or your local cooperative extension agent.

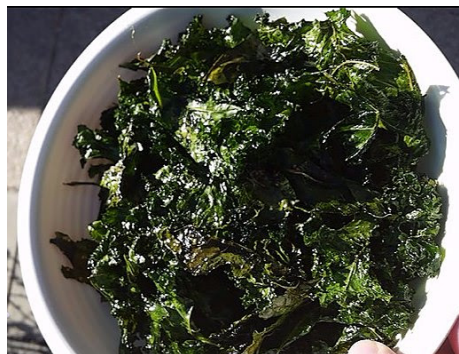
Recipe

Kale Chips

Prep time: 10 mins **Cook time:** 10 mins **Total time:** 20 mins **Servings:** 6-8

INGREDIENTS:

1 Bunch Kale
 1 T Olive oil
 1 t Salt



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Heat oven to 300F.
2. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Wash kale and dry well.
3. Remove and discard the thick stems from the kale.
4. Tear leaves into bite-sized pieces.
5. Drizzle kale with olive oil and sprinkle with salt. Toss to coat.
6. Arrange kale pieces in a single layer on the baking sheet.
7. Bake 10 minutes or until edges are slightly brown but not burnt.
8. Serve and Enjoy!

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