

Brooklyn Botanic Garden Kitchen Gardening Activity

Spring is a sens-ational time of year where we look forward to feeling a nice warm breeze, seeing and smelling colorful fragrant blooms and hearing a cacophony of chirping birds. Before long we will be outdoors enjoying these experiences. But while we're inside, here is a fun way to connect with nature.

Let's look in your kitchen for a fun and easy gardening activity you can do with the person you care for.

Materials:

Seeds: any fruits that have seeds: lemon, orange, apple, pepper, tomato, etc. You can also use dried beans or corn (kernels in a bag, not in a pouch for the microwave) that have been soaked in water for 24 hours.

Container: wide shallow pot, plastic food container, plastic berry containers of any size, egg carton, anything that will hold seeds, soil and not dissolve in water. Make sure the containers have holes in the bottom for drainage.

Other: napkin, marker or pencil, water, gloves, Popsicle stick or plastic knife, sticky mailing labels and soil – preferably potting soil, but if you use outdoor soil check to make sure that you are leaving the critters outside.

If you use outdoor soil, keep your new plants away from your house plants to prevent infection of pests.

Directions:

1. Fill your container $\frac{1}{2}$ way (about 2" of soil).
2. If you are using beans – place them $\frac{1}{2}$ " to 1" apart in your container.
3. If you are using smaller seeds from a tomato or pepper for example, take the napkin, open it up and make dots about 1" apart so they are evenly spaced. This will help guide how far apart to place the seeds and will help keep them in place.
4. Cut the napkin to fit to the inside of the container bottom. Place the container on a small tray to. Put one seed on each dot so that it sticks (tomatoes have a gel around the seeds so they will stick. Pepper seeds are drier, so you might have to wet them a little to get them to stick.) Place the napkin on the soil.
5. Cover with about $1\frac{1}{2}$ " to 2" of soil. Water until the soil is moist and the water has drained out of the bottom of the container. Place container in a warm place until seeds germinate (begin to grow).

6. Label your container so that you know what plants they are, especially if you have a variety of seeds in your container. You can write names on Popsicle sticks to put in the soil or sticky labels.
7. Check on your seeds every day. Once seeds start germinating and popping out of the soil, place the container in a sunny location.
8. Care for your plants by watering when dry (feel the soil with your finger). Keep rotating the container so that the sun hits all sides of the plants.
9. After May 15th for NYC (end of the threat of frost), you can place your plants outside. I would suggest doing this gradually (few hours each day) so they “harden off” (the plants get used to the outdoor temperatures). Enjoy nurturing your plants and hopefully you will have happy plants for your patio, garden, or a very sunny windowsill.

Guest Speaker

Joanne D’Auria, Access and School Workshop Coordinator at Brooklyn Botanic Garden is a Horticultural Therapist who facilitates a monthly Memory Program for people with dementia and their caregivers. Check the BBG.org website for more information.

Additional resources:

Cherry Blossom Watch

<https://www.bbg.org/collections/cherries>

Japanese Garden Stroll

https://www.bbg.org/news/stroll_through_the_japanese_garden_in_bloom_video

Gardening Activities

<https://www.bbg.org/gardening/how-tos>