



Fashion Action

Human Vitality

Planetary Wellbeing

## Human Vitality

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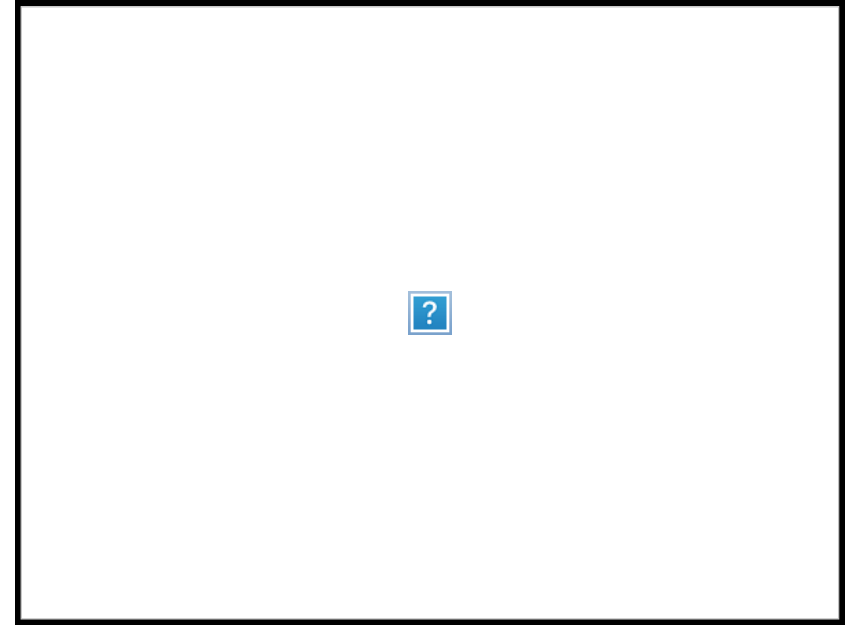
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## Get Your Kids Excited about Healthy Eating with Gardening

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Kids who garden are also more likely to be easier to coax into eating fruits and vegetables. The more enthusiastic they are about gardening, the more interested they will become in vegetables and their many benefits. The tricky part is in **getting kids interested in gardening**, and deciding what plants to plant. The best and most effective way, however, is to start with staple plants and bulbs that grow fast and can be counted on to give best results every time. But if you choose the right plants, they'll be delighted with the results and will surely be more enthusiastic about eating healthy, too. Teach your kids how to recognize healthy foods with this planting with kids guide so they can grow up to be healthy adults!



### Quick Facts: Benefits of Planting for Kids

- **Kids can't recognize fresh produce!** [Watch Jamie Oliver talk](#) to see American children baffled by the sight of a tomato. In urbanized societies, children do not experience the process of growing food and therefore have no knowledge of where food comes from as a result. This can have cascading impacts on healthy food choices.
- **90% of kids don't get enough vegetables, fruits:**<sup>[i]</sup> In fact, preschool-aged children consume just 80% of the recommended servings of fruits and 25% of recommended vegetables.<sup>[ii]</sup> Yet they need them for compounds like **antioxidants** and phytochemicals that prolong life, reduce risk of many cancers, and prevent chronic illnesses such as Alzheimer's disease, cardiovascular disease, and hypertension.<sup>[iii]</sup> <sup>[iv]</sup> <sup>[v]</sup>
- **Gardening teaches kids about food origins and health:** Children who participate in gardening are able to list more specific health benefits of eating fruits and vegetables<sup>[vi]</sup> and have an increased interest in eating them.<sup>[vii]</sup>
- **Repeated tastings are key for kids:** Kids need to try a new food around five to 10 times before determining whether he or she really likes it or not. <sup>[viii]</sup>

### Take Action! Easy Plants for Kids to Grow

1. **Beans:** Beans are large and fast-germinating seeds that can grow with very little intervention. They sprout quickly and grow fast, so they will certainly keep your kids interested.
2. **Pumpkins.** If your kid is ready for something bigger, choose pumpkins, which are always fun to watch as they grow. They can also last quite a while, so if you time your project well, you'll have a homemade Jack-o-Lantern on Halloween and a pumpkin pie for Thanksgiving.
3. **Avocado.** Don't forget to include some fruits in your kid's gardening project. There are a lot of fruits to choose from, but some are harder to grow and would need a larger space. If you only have a small home garden, a great fruit to have your child plant is the avocado, which grows roots in water – a great visual way for your child to learn about the connection between plant and roots!
4. **Sunflowers:** Planting giant, colorful flowers can help boost your children's general interest in gardening. One of the best kinds of flowers to start with is the very distinctive sunflower; choose the right variety to produce tasty seeds you can roast at the end of the season.
5. **Lamb's Ears.** Add at least one plant with unique and distinctive characteristics to your list of plants for kids to grow. This will help make your child understand that there are multitudes of plants out there and that each one is unique.

## Dig Deeper: the Connection Between Gardening and Healthy Kids

- Learn more about the connection between understanding fruits and vegetables and eating them with this Cornell University study: [The Effects of School Garden Experiences on Middle School-Aged Students' Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors Associated with Vegetable Consumption](#).
- [Determinants of fruit and vegetable consumption among children and adolescents](#) provides more insights into what makes kids want to eat their fruits and veggies.

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