Planting the Seed

My Mom was a city girl that married a farmer. I have fond memories of working in the garden that was full of vegetables and flowers. The garden was basically Mom’s and my project along with several flower beds around the house. My Dad even gave me a tractor tire for my first flower garden. We had chickens, ducks, pigs, and Old Red the milk cow, so we were kept busy.

I have found several articles through the years that encouraged seasoned gardeners to “plant the seed” that will hopefully inspire a love of gardening in a youngster.

If you want your child to love gardening, the best things you can do, in order of importance are the following:

1. Show them how much you love gardening just by reveling in your own garden every day.
2. Surround them with great gardens. That doesn’t mean a show place. It could be a messy, riotously colored cottage garden; decorative little getaway; or lots of colorful pots.
3. Give them good gardening experiences. These will be great memories in years to come.

* Recognize that Kids’ gardening priorities are different,
* Let Kids choose what to plant. Offer guidance and make sure there are some sure-success plants among their picks,
* Relax your standards. Crooked rows or weeds as pets are fine.
* Leave room for some good old-fashioned digging,
* Model the message that some insects are beneficial,
* Make sure that you balance the work with adventure by Keeping it simple; Make it fun/bend your rules; Make it about smelling and tasting and hiding and seeking; and Be in the moment.

Search for the reddest tomatoes and eat them off the vine. The trick is keeping yourself present while you are sharing a moment in the garden with your children. Be patient. Pretend that you’re their age, seeing the garden through their eyes.

You could plant a Pirate’s garden! The website, Kidsgardening.org, lays out a plan that might provide some fun in the garden. Select a site that gets six to eight hours of sunlight and plenty of room for kids to romp and play. Plant a pot of gold. Find an old wooden box, drill holes at the bottom, fill with soil, and then plant yellow blooming plants like marigolds. For silver, plant a money plant (Lunaria annua). The fruit looks like silver dollars. Leave a section of the garden unplanted with shovels handy for your young adventurers to dig for buried treasure. Attach metal “loot” to strings and hang from a tree for a fun and simple wind chime. Create an illusion of water by using blue colored pebbles or blue flowering plants. A bean tepee can represent a pirate hideout.

Get creative with additional accessories such as a garden gnome with an eye patch, a partially buried “treasure” chest, plastic alligators, mermaid dolls, and even a stuffed parrot! Remember this garden them is designed to inspire creativity and foster pretend play in your children, so make sure to leave room for small feet to run and jump along with areas for them to dig and explore.

Remember: One of the best things you ever grow may be a gardener!