

Seed Catalog Fun

Things have changed quickly in the past week thanks to the Coronavirus! Students have been sent home from school for at least 3 weeks and parents are wondering what in the world their children are going to do?

One of my favorite websites, **Kidsgardening.org**, has some fantastic activities that are free to download. One such activity involves utilizing all those seed catalogs you have been bringing in from the mailbox each day.

Whether it's cold day or a rainy afternoon, seed catalogs can provide hours of fun when the outdoor garden is unavailable. They're informative, entertaining, and a potential source of games and crafts.

Materials: 1) assorted seed catalogs 2) scissors 3) variety of craft supplies

Approximate time to complete: 30 minutes to hours

Location: Indoors

Instructions:

1. Gather a variety of seed catalogs. You might have enough of your own, or you might want to contact gardening friends and neighbors.
2. With scissors in hand, let your creativity run wild. Seed catalogs are filled with photos of vigorous plants, beautiful flowers, and shiny, ripe fruits and vegetables. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

Plan Your Garden

Use seed catalogs to plan your garden for the next growing season. The first step in the planning process is to take an **inventory** of the seeds you have left from last year. Once you've finished your inventory, make a list of the packets you want to replace. Have your kids price-shop from various catalogs to find the best deals. Talk about the advantages and disadvantages of organic, treated, and untreated seeds. Look at buying some new varieties of types of plants to try in the garden. Read the descriptions and days to maturity carefully to be sure the annual vegetables and flowers selected will grow and mature in your climate.

Make Plant Labels

After selecting your seed, make sure to keep the photos of the ones you ordered to make plant labels for your garden. You can glue them to index cards and then laminate them for the season.

Decorate with Collages

A collage is a collection of materials (in this case plant photos) glued onto a surface. You can use regular glue, glue sticks or decoupage glue. You can make place mats, greeting cards, bookmarks, and more.

Make a Model

Using old boxes of different sizes, use the catalog photos to make a 3-D model of your future garden. This may help make planning more fun and engaging for young gardeners.

Create a Card Game

Younger kids can sort the cards by color or plant type. You could also create a memory-based matching game or assign different values to flowers and vegetables, such as a tomato is equal to an ace or a zinnia is equal to a deuce to create your own garden-inspired playing cards.

In February I wrote about planning your garden and dreaming big! Sit with your young gardeners and make a list of what they would like to plant in the garden, what they love to eat from the garden, what new vegetable they would like to grow in the garden, and don't forget to dream big!