

The Wellness Family

Dr. Cuperus Keeps You Informed

The Wellness Garden

Gardening has long been considered a relaxing and productive way to spend your time. Whether you're planting flowers and landscaping your yard, or growing a vegetable garden for your family, this is a wonderful way to pass the time.

Lessons to Be Learned

In our fast-paced society where the family unit itself struggles to stay grounded, a garden can be a wonderful way to teach our children valuable life-lessons and principles.

In our modern world of convenience, our children have been taught that food comes in a box or a package from a grocery store. Even if we are shopping at healthier stores, it's probable that our children think that everything they eat comes from a building. A vegetable garden is a wonderful way to help our children understand the true origin of nutrition.

We also live in an instant society with drive-thru dinners, microwave lunches and online movies. It's rare that we have to wait for anything and so our children are growing up without understanding the principle of "delayed gratification". A garden is a wonderful way to help children get involved in a project that is going to require effort and patience to enjoy.

Additionally, a garden requires dedication and hard work, which can teach our children the valuable principle of "follow through". Whether it's a flower garden or a vegetable garden, this project will require time and effort. In today's society with video games and DVR, our children have been trained to interrupt the process, just pause and come back to it. A garden can be an excellent way for children to experience a sense of accomplishment and the reward of a job well done.

Chemicals and Ecology

One of the most valuable lessons we can teach our children with a garden is an understanding of nature. Everything around us is in a chemical or living balance and our backyard is no different. Even though we can't see them, there are thousands of microorganisms and many insects and critters living in a delicate balance. Introduce the wrong chemical and you can reach, touch and effectively throw off the whole system.

Everything is connected, so realize that no one thing acts in a vacuum. There is a balance. A chemical that was created to kill one pest may very well kill other helpful organisms. A treatment that was meant to help certain plants flourish may actually contain chemicals that are dangerous to other plants.

What to grow?

When deciding what to grow, remember that your children will have more fun and benefit greatly from the lesson if they have a goal in mind. So, consider growing a topical garden. For instance, a salad or pizza garden can be great "topics".



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With the "salad" garden be sure to plant all of the things that make up a great dinner salad. These can include but are not limited to: tomatoes, basil, cucumbers, carrots, radishes, beans, iceberg lettuce or spinach.

For a healthy "pizza" garden, you may want to grow seasonings and tomatoes for the sauce, as well as Swiss chard, zucchini, eggplant, bell peppers and onions for toppings. With this topic, your options are only limited by what you and your children are willing to put on top of a healthy pizza.

The vegetables you grow should be chosen based on your environment but can include corn, carrots, peas, broccoli, spinach, radicchio, asparagus, and more. Whatever you choose, remember to have fun and let your children help as much as they are willing and able.

For instance, creating the row markers can be great fun for younger children. These can be drawn out and then colored or www.craftjr.com has garden markers that can be printed and colored. Consider allowing each child their own row to decide what to grow and to create the markers.

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Watering Your Garden

A rainwater collection system will require some work but is definitely the most ecologically sound watering system. By placing a barrel under a rain gutter you can collect rainwater to use for your plants. For easy to follow instructions to build a rainwater collection system visit the website www.wikihow.com/Build-a-Rainwater-Collection-System.

Home Remedies for Garden Pests

No one likes pests in their garden. Whether it's aphids eating the roses or caterpillars and snails chewing on vegetables, we want them gone. The problem is that most chemical pesticides throw off the ecological balance of a garden and cause more harm than good. That's why it's wisest to use pesticides that are environmentally safe and ecologically sound.

A sure sign that you have pests are holes in the leaves or yellowing and lines in the leaves. Once you've begun to see signs of pests, you need to find options for getting rid of them. Remember, before treating for pests, some pests are friends of your garden and should be left alone. These include ladybugs, praying mantis, lacewings, spiders and horse hair snakes.

Banana peels repeatedly placed around the base of your roses will ward off aphids with an added bonus of bigger blooms due to the extra potassium, and most caterpillars and snails can be chased off with an alcohol or garlic based spray.

To make an alcohol based spray; mix 1 to 2 cups of rubbing alcohol per quart of water. Do not use undiluted rubbing alcohol as it will damage your plants and potentially burn the leaves.

Garlic spray is made by soaking 3 ounces of finely minced garlic cloves in 2 teaspoons of mineral oil for at least 24 hours and slowly adding 1 pint of water with ¼ ounce of non-detergent liquid soap to the mixture. It should then be strained and poured into a jar for storage. This mixture is used by mixing 1 to 2 tablespoons with a pint of water in a spray bottle.

Herbal sprays are also suggested but may not be as effective. These can be made by mashing or blending 1 to 2 cups of fresh Elder leaves and soaking them in 2 to 4 cups of water for 12 hours or more hours. Strain the water through cheesecloth and dilute with an added 2 to 4 cups of water before using. As with the garlic spray, you can add ¼ ounce of liquid soap to the mixture to help it stick to the leaves and spread better.

Conclusion

Your Family Wellness Chiropractor has a special appreciation of the natural balance and order of things required to plant, nurture and harvest a garden. As one of the few healthcare professions that recognize that we all live in a delicate balance interdependent upon each other, your Doctor of Chiropractic understands that a garden can be a symbol of health and wellness.

There is more to planting a garden than just preparing the soil and dropping the seeds. It can be an opportunity to reconnect with your children, nourish your family physically and emotionally as well as a chance to educate your entire family on the delicate balance of nature.

For more information on growing environmentally safe gardens you can visit the following websites:

www.ahs.org

www.goorganicgardening.com

www.gardensalive.com

Dear Patient,

Dr. Cuperus is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. So take a moment today to discuss with your Family Wellness Chiropractor any concerns you may have regarding your family's overall health and wellness.

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