I HAVE A GREEN THUMB

POWER UP

INTRODUCTION

Plants are invaluable resources. Used properly, they can feed us, decorate a wall or garden, help create relaxing spaces, purify the air we breathe, provide homes to tiny creatures, and much more. Have you ever seen plant graffiti? Lettuce growing vertically? Giant drawings of various plants? Well it's time to roll up your sleeves and fire up your imagination, because today you're in charge of planting and growing your own sprouts.

ages 13 +

LOCATION

Indoors or outside

DURATION

– Day 1: 45–60 minutes
– Following days: 5 minutes twice a day to water the sprouts
– Last day: 30 minutes to pick and taste

TIMEFRAME

We recommend starting on Monday to see the results by Friday.

GOALS

– Encourage the consumption of fruits and vegetables.
– Develop knowledge of how plants grow.
– Educate about eating local.
– Introduce campers to nature and how it works.

TIPS FOR COUNSELOR

Sprouting is inexpensive, highly educational, loads of fun, and so delicious! Why not learn how to do it yourself?

– Ask the campers if they have ever grown food before today.
– Start by asking question from the ''Did you know?'' section. During the activity, ask the campers questions to see what they know (see counselor's sheet).
– Show the steps of sprouting (see illustrate).

! – DON'T FORGET

Place the seeds that require soaking in water the evening before and leave them overnight so they will be ready for planting the next day (see counselor's sheet).

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EQUIPMENT

— Bottom half of a plastic water bottle
— Seeding soil
— Variety of sprouting seeds (see the counselor's sheet)
— Popsicle sticks
— Felt
— Spray bottle
— Scissors

THIS ACTIVITY DEVELOPS

— CREATIVITY
— TASTE
— SENSE OF PRIDE AND ACCOMPLISHMENT

STEPS

1. Have the campers cut their plastic bottles in half and keep only the bottom sections.
2. Hand out soil to the campers.
3. Add 1 handful of soil *(3 to 5 centimeters of soil is enough to get a good harvest).*
4. Let the campers choose their own variety of seeds. *You can show them the table on the counselor's sheet to help them choose.*
5. Sprinkle 1 tablespoon of seeds into the containers and push them gently into the soil. Make sure the seeds do not lie on top of one another.
6. Water the soil thoroughly.
7. Write the varieties of seeds on sticks and place them in the soil.
8. Remember to water the sprouts with the spray bottle. Tell the campers they are responsible for spraying their sprouts with water at least twice a day. *Important!* Keep the soil wet at all times.
9. Cover the sprouts and put them in a dark place. When the first 2 small leaves (called «cotyledons») appear, place the sprouts in the light in a structure created and decorated by the group (see below). Make sure the sprouts don't dry out in the sun.

Variation

— If you have a big enough container, let the group design a mosaic and sow their seeds in that pattern. The image will appear as the sprouts grow.

Take this activity further

— With the campers, invent different sprout recipes and make a group recipe book.
— Sell the books to the parents to raise funds for your camp or simply so the campers can recreate the recipes at home.

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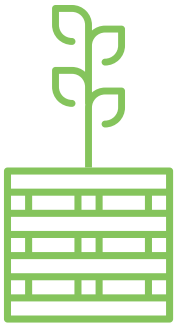
WOOD PALLET GARDEN [INTRODUCTION]

You decide what your wood pallet garden will look like. You can use the top and middle boards to grow sprouts and the bottom board for gardening tools. Or you can use the top and bottom boards for sprouts. Look through some garden photos with the campers to come up with your design.



EQUIPMENT

– 1 wood pallet
– Hammer
– Nail
– Scissors
– Thick black plastic bag
–Stapler
– Seeding soil
– Sprouts in containers
– Wooden sticks
– Marker
– Craft material

! – NOTE

This project encourages cooperation between age groups. Older campers can do some of the tasks, like removing the boards and nailing them into place, and younger campers can decorate the boards and add soil to the containers. Use your own judgement to decide who is old enough to use which tools.

Tip

It is more interesting to select a wide variety of sprouts and get many different shapes, colours, and flavours. The different growth rates of the sprouts will also extend the use of the pallet garden.

STEPS

1. Remove 2 boards form the pallet (see illustration).
2. Remove the nails from the boards.
3. Nail one of the boards under the top board on the pallet to create closed container (see illustration). Nail the remaining board under the middle board on the pallet to create a second holder.
   Tips: Use enough nails to make everything stable.
4. Cut the plastic bag into rectangles slightly larger than the containers you just made *(see illustration)*.
5. Arrange the sections of plastic inside the containers and staple them into position *(see illustration)*.
6. Take the scissors and trim the plastic along the edge of the containers *(see illustration)*.
7. Decorate the structure with paint, craft material, stickers, etc. Use your imagination.
8. Fill the containers about halfway with soil.
9. Replant the sprouts from the pots in the new container you just made. Be sure to leave enough space between them *(see illustration)*.
10. Finish your garden by filling the holes in with soil.
11. Don't forget to identify the sprouts! Write the name of each type of sprout on a stick with the marker and plant each stick next to its sprouts.
12. Water your garden to give the energy it needs to keep growing!

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WOOD PALLET GARDEN [INTRODUCTION]

STEP 1

STEP 3

STEP 4

STEP 5

STEP 6

STEP 7

STEP 9

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Recipe!

SPROUT SALAD

The sprouts can be used in kitchen workshops. Have them with salads, sandwiches, soups, crackers, or any number of ways! Here is a recipe to get you started:

INGREDIENTS

Salad

— 2 cups sprout blend

— 12 cherry tomatoes, halved

Dressing

— 20 ml olive oil

— 20 ml balsamic vinegar

— 15 ml maple syrup

— Salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION

1. Combine ingredients for dressing.
2. Combine salad ingredients in a bowl.
3. Pour dressing over salad, toss, and serve immediately.

Harvesting

Cut the sprouts at 1.5 cm from the soil to avoid the risk of contamination.

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COUNSELOR'S SHEET

- Don't use seed mixes. Buy them separately so they can be identified.
- When you cut the leaves, they will not grow back. The rest goes in the compost.
- Reward the campers by showing their parents the mosaic and letting them take their sprouts home.
- It is normal for the sprouts not to flower. The sprouts can be eaten as soon as they are grown.

STEPS OF SPROUTING

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DID YOU KNOW

SPROUTING

Consists of soaking seeds in a bit of water for 2 to 10 days. This allows the germ to grow by feeding off the nutrients contained in the seed. Every part of the sprout is edible.

SPROUTS

Come from seeds planted in seeding soil. They need a bit of a helping hand. They have to be exposed to sunlight or a proper source of artificial light. They also need nutrient-rich soil, because the seeds themselves don't contain enough nutrients. We eat the sprouts, not the roots[1].

— *Sprouts can be eaten raw or cooked.*
— *Sprouts are high in vitamins and minerals, which helps you grow up big and strong[2].*
— *You can grow sprouts indoors in the winter.*
— *Some sprouts are ready in less than a week.*
— *You can grow bamboo sprouts[3]!*
— *Sprouting your own fruits and vegetables is a good way to get fresh produce on a budget.*

EATING LOCAL

Means eating food harvested near where you live, meaning about 100 to 250 km from your home (name a city roughly that far away from your location to give the campers an idea of that distance). A person who eats locally is called a «locavore».

The advantages of eating local:

— *Less greenhouse gases are produced (less transportation).*
— *Fresher and often better-tasting food (fruits and vegetables are often picked early and finish ripening without sunlight during shipment.*
— *It supports the local economy. Buying local produce allows local growers to make a living from their harvest.*

EATING LOCAL ALL YEAR LONG

Here are a few things you can do:

— *At the grocery store, choose produce grown in your province.*
— *Go to local or nearby farmer's markets and buy directly from the growers.*
— *Pick your own apples, strawberries, squash, and other produce.*
— *Freeze or preserve local produce to enjoy them year-round (e.g., freeze puréed pumpkin for muffins, make spaghetti sauce with fresh tomatoes, pickle carrots and beans).*

1. MAPAQ. 2017, 2. Monnier, 2006, 3. Organic Facts. 2017

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COUNSELOR'S SHEET

Here are a few varieties of seeds to sprout in soil. Select seeds appropriate for the age group (e.g., sweeter varieties for younger campers, stronger flavours for older campers) or the length of the activity. Sow 10 to 12 seeds per square inch for smaller seeds (e.g., cabbage, arugula) and 6 to 8 seeds per square inch for larger seeds (e.g., sunflower, peas).

Level of difficulty ● *Medium to hard* ● Medium ● Easy

VARIETY	SOAK	GROWTH	DESCRIPTION	TIPS
Basil ●	**15 min**	***Step 1*** *– Germination: 4-5 days* ***Step 2*** *– Sprout: 14-21 days*	*Highly aromatic and pleasant. Kids love them.*	*Warm climate plant*
Chard ●	**6-8 h**	***Step 1*** *– Germination: 4-6 days* ***Step 2*** *– Sprout: 12-18 days*	*Lovely purple colour. Kids like the sweet flavour.*	*Susceptible to rot. The skins tend to stick to the leaves.*
Beets ●	**8-12 h**	***Step 1*** *– Germination: 4-6 days* ***Step 2*** *– Sprout: 12-18 days*	*Lovely purple colour. Kids like the sweet flavour.*	*Susceptible to rot. The skins tend to stick to the leaves.* !
Brocoli ●	**6 h**	***Step 1*** *– Germination: 3-4 days* ***Step 2*** *– Sprout: 5-7 days*	*Small. Smell and taste like broccoli. Good choice for older campers.*	*Susceptible to rot. The skins tend to stick to the leaves.* !
Corn ●	**6-8 h**	***Step 1*** *– Germination: 4-6 days* ***Step 2*** *– Sprout: 12-18 days*	*Kids like the sweet flavour.*	
Mustard ●	**1-2 h**	***Step 1*** *– Germination: 3-4 days* ***Step 2*** *– Sprout: 6-10 days*	*Zesty*	*Good choice for older campers.*
Green peas ●	**6-8 h**	***Step 1*** *– Germination: 3-5 days* ***Step 2*** *– Sprout: 5-7 days*	*Lovely purple colour. Kids like the sweet flavour. Easy to handle.*	*Sprouts are sweeter in cooler climates.*
Radish ●	**5-6 h**	***Step 1*** *– Germination: 3-4 days* ***Step 2*** *– Sprout: 6 - 8 days*	*Zesty, fast growing.*	*Good choice for older campers.*
Arugula ●	**Pas de trempage**	***Step 1*** *– Germination: 3-5 days* ***Step 2*** *– Sprout: 5-7 days*	*Zesty*	*Good choice for older campers.*
Sunflower *(unshelled seeds)* ●	**4-8h**	***Step 1*** *– Germination: 2-3 days* ***Step 2*** *– Sprout: 5-7 days*	*Good for kids. Easy to handle.*	*Harvest when the cotyledons are well formed.*
Alfalfa ●	**5-12 h**	***Step 1*** *– Germination: 3-5 days* ***Step 2*** *– Sprout: 5-7 days*	*Kids like the sweet flavour.*	*Very delicate.* *Handle with care.*

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