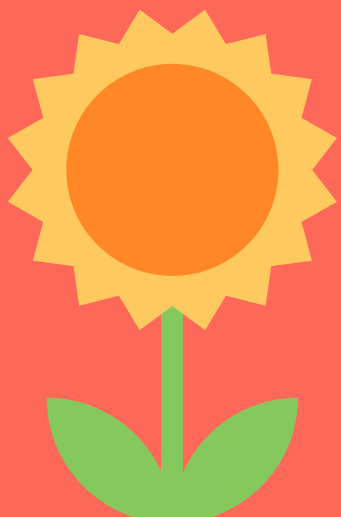


OPERATION

G.A.R.D.E.N



Want to challenge your campers and help them learn a bit more about gardening?

The Operation G.A.R.D.E.N activity is a fun, active way to introduce them to two important steps in the gardening process!



MATERIALS

Activity 1

- **Three hoops** (or pylons to mark off three “garden” zones)
- **One pinny** per person (one colour per team, three colours in total)
- About **15 different objects** which will act as “seeds” (e.g., balloons, frisbees, small pylons, water bottles, paper balls, cardboard boxes, etc.)

Activity 2

- **30 balloons** filled with water
- **Six containers** that can accommodate the balloons*



*For older children, you can use six pitchers as containers and glasses instead of balloons (one glass per person).

PSST!

You will see “Gardener’s corner” text boxes scattered throughout this document. These text boxes are filled with information about gardening that you can pass on to your campers.

Background

Operation G.A.R.D.E.N

Once upon a time, there was a small village named Gardenia. The people of Gardenia were gardeners and they all worked in the town's big communal garden. Everyone was happy and had more than enough fruits and vegetables to eat, until one day a huge storm hit Gardenia. Luckily, no one was hurt, but the communal garden was destroyed by the storm.

The people of Gardenia need you to help rebuild their big garden. If you accept this mission, you will have to complete two challenges.

The first challenge is to find a safe spot for Gardenia's new communal garden, and then track down the seeds that were scattered by the wind and replant them.

The second challenge is to find water and bring some back to the garden to water the new sprouts. It has not rained since the big storm. Water is therefore a very rare and limited resource. There is a big water reservoir nearby, but to gain access to it you will have to answer the water guardian's questions.

Let's go!
The people of Gardenia
need your help!



ACTIVITY 01 The new garden

01

Preparation

Gather your materials.

PSST!

You can ask your campers to spruce up their team name with an original touch (e.g., the atomic ants).

Ideally, teams 1 to 3 should have the same number of campers. For the birds, we suggest two campers for a group of about 10 campers in total.

Tip: Increase or decrease the level of difficulty by changing the number of birds. The more birds there are, the harder it gets!



02

Organizing the activity

Start looking for a spot to build the new garden with your group.



Make it clear to your campers that the spot they choose must respect the same criteria as a real garden:

- **Sunny all day** (ideally between six and eight hours)
- **Flat**, not-so-bumpy surface
- **Not too close to trees** (to avoid the shade and prevent roots from interfering with the growth of the vegetables)
- **Easily accessible** on all sides



Once you've chosen a spot, divide your group into **four teams**:

- **Team 1:** The ants
- **Team 2:** The earthworms
- **Team 3:** The frogs
- **Team 4:** The birds



GARDENER'S CORNER

Choosing the right soil is key to having a successful garden! The soil must be a mix of sand, clay, and decomposed organic matter. You can boost it with natural fertilizers (compost, manure, or crushed eggshells).



3

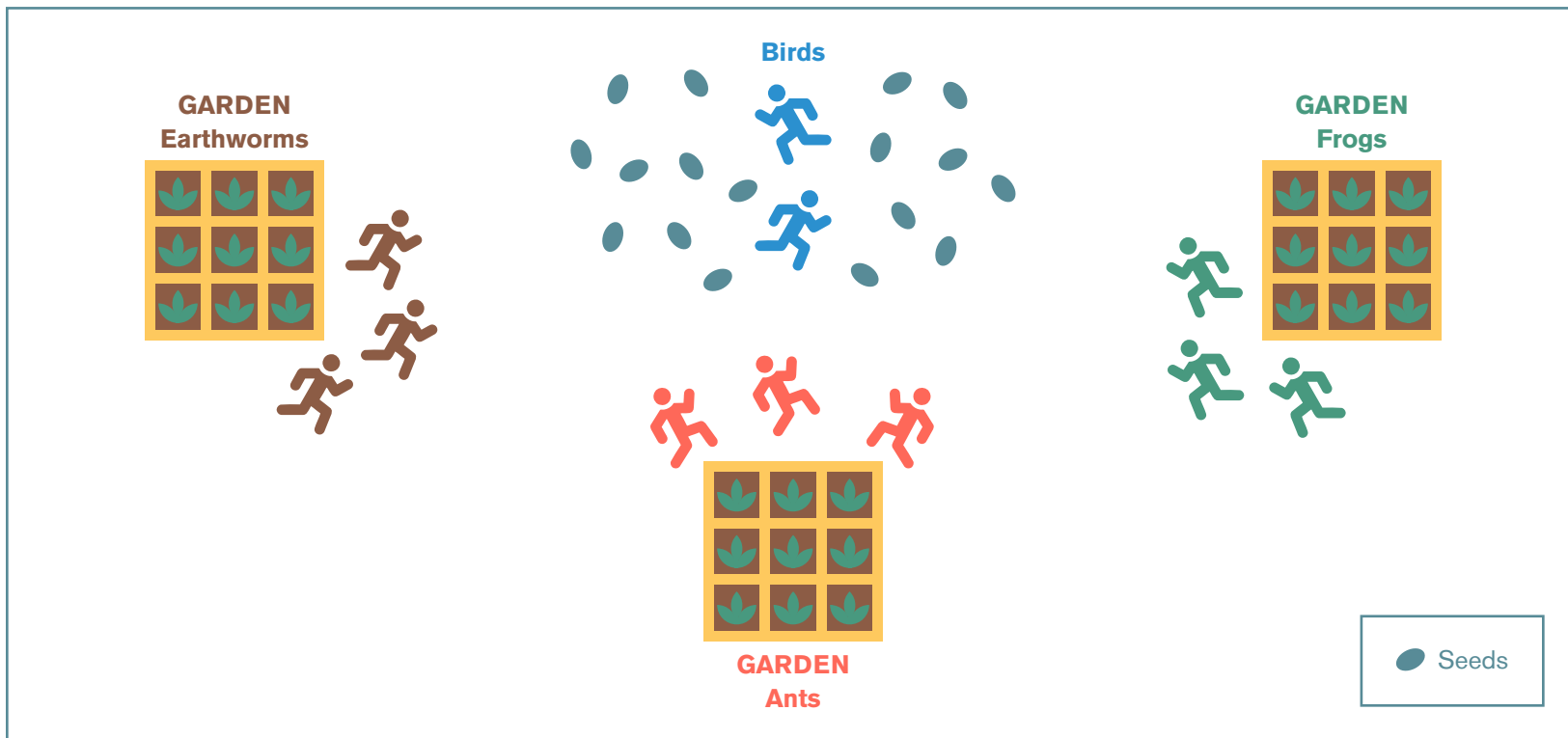
Organizing the site

Ask the ants, earthworms, and frogs to choose a spot to plant their garden (hoop) →

Find a spot that's about the same distance from all the "gardens" to scatter the objects that represent the seeds.

PSST!
You can ask your campers to invent a team chant while you finish up placing the objects.

Organizing the site: example



4

Introducing the activity

Read aloud the following **background information** to your campers:

Ants, earthworms, and frogs are essential to a proper working garden. It's because of them that our seeds and plants can grow nice and strong!



EVERYONE HAS THEIR ROLE TO PLAY IN THE GARDEN:

- 1** **Ants** eat insects that can cause harm to the garden, and they make lots of holes that help air circulation within the soil. They are also super-recyclers who turn waste into food for the garden.
- 2** **Earthworms** are also able to make food for the garden by breaking down waste. Their specialty is digging tunnels that let water and air circulate throughout the garden!
- 3** Adult **frogs** feed on all kinds of insects (flies, butterflies, dragonflies, caterpillars) that can pose a threat to what's growing in your garden.
- 4** **Birds** are a bit too fond of eating! They like to munch on seeds, young sprouts, and even vegetable leaves that are ready for picking!



GARDENER'S CORNER

If you want to have frogs in your garden, you should think about setting up wet zones or at least installing features such as rock piles, tiles, or logs (these will attract frogs seeking relief from the hot sun).

Some small birds (e.g., robins, goldfinches, chickadees, or even sparrows) make a positive contribution by eating insects that pose a threat to the garden.



5

Execution



The goal of the game is to bring back as many seeds as possible to your garden and make them grow!



The ants, earthworms, and frogs will go running in search of seeds to bring back to their garden.

ATTENTION!

The birds are hungry and want to keep the delicious seeds all for themselves! They will try to stop the ants, earthworms, and frogs from completing their mission.

If a bird touches you, you have to go back to your garden.

- **The ants** must go back on **all fours**.
- **The earthworms** must go back **side-shuffling**.
- **The frogs** must go back **frog-hopping**.

The game is over when there are no more seeds in the middle, or when all the time you have allotted has elapsed (e.g., 10 min).

Once the game is over, the number of seeds per garden is counted.

The team that has the most seeds wins.

If there are seeds left over in the middle at the end of the allotted time, the birds win.

After the seeds have been planted in the garden, it's time to water them! Move on to challenge 2.



VARIATIONS

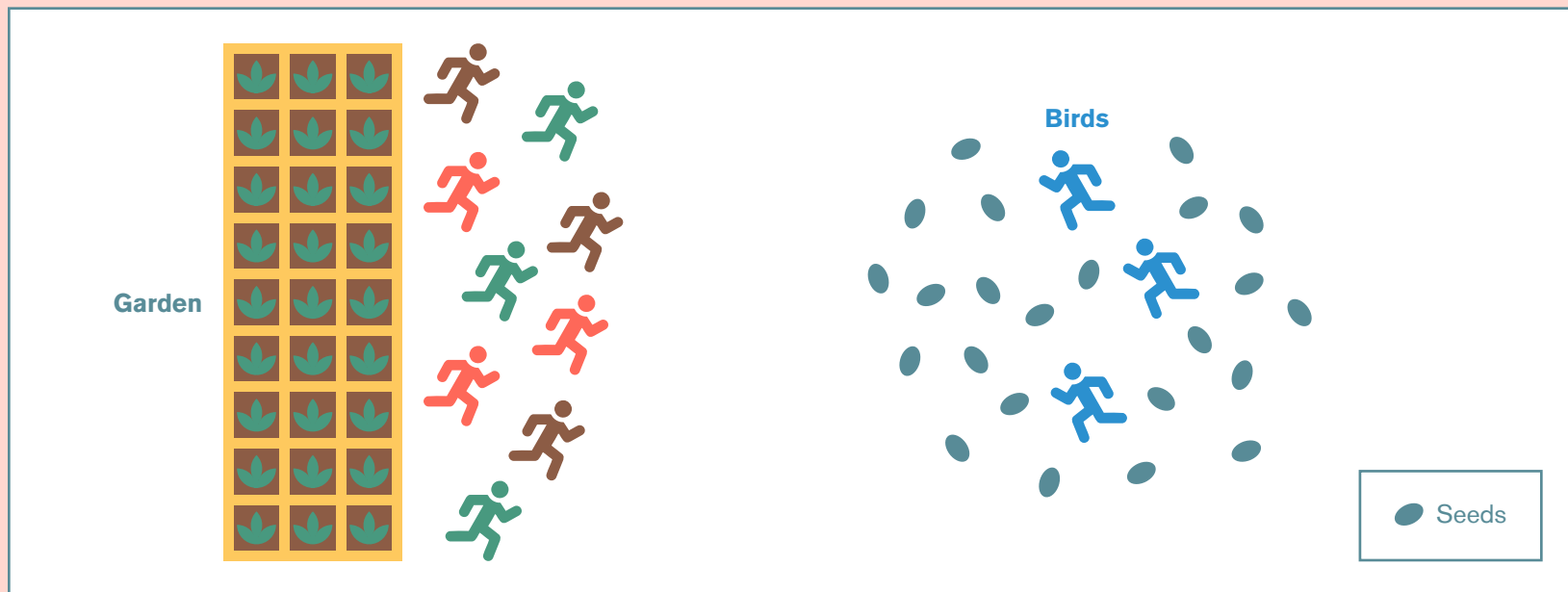
- You can only bring back **one seed at a time** to your garden.
- You may not steal seeds from the garden of **another group**.
- If you have a seed in your hand and a bird touches you, you must **drop the seed** that you've collected and go back to your garden.
- Add a bandit bird that can snatch sprouts from the gardens and **bring them back to the middle**.
- You can add **SUPER objects** that increase the number of seeds when they are brought back to the garden.

Examples of super objects:

- **Fertilizer** = 2x the number of seeds
- **Sun** = +3 seeds
- **Water** = +3 seeds
- **Scarecrow** = Prevents the bandit bird from stealing sprouts from your garden.

- **Everyone together** against the birds → Make one shared garden for the ants, earthworms, and frogs.

Variation: *Stronger together!*

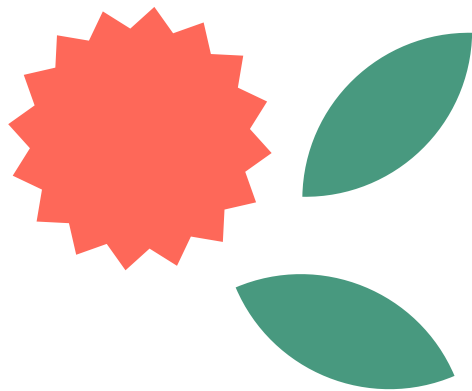


01

Preparation

Make sure you've read the **questions** and **answers** before beginning the activity.

Gather your materials.



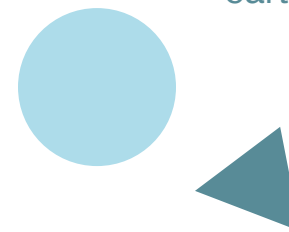
02

Organizing the activity

Fill up **10 water balloons** per team.*



Keep the **same teams** as from Activity 1 but divvy up the birds between the ants, earthworms, and frogs.



* If you use glasses, fill up three pitchers of water.

3

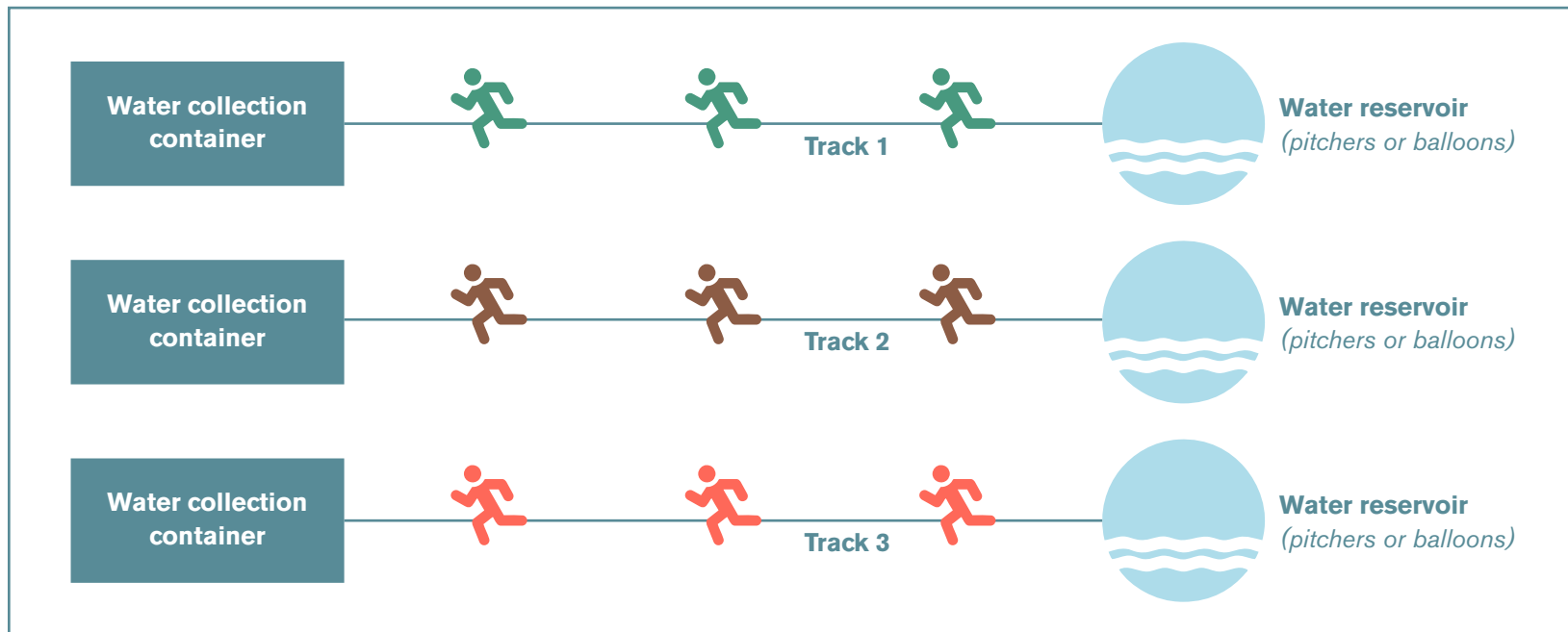
Organizing the site

Prepare your site for a **relay-style activity**.

Install one **water reservoir** and one **water collection container** per team at opposite ends of the track.

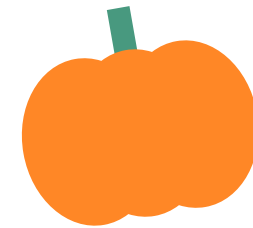
Place **water balloons** in each reservoir (or one **pitcher** filled with water per reservoir).

Example 2: Organizing the site



4

Introducing the activity



Read aloud the following **background information** to your group:

Once you arrive at the water reservoir, you will come face-to-face with the giant guarding it. He will only let you pass if you find the right answers to the following questions.

PSST!

The answers can be found at the end of each clue.

1

I am a small red fruit. I taste mostly sweet with a bit of sour. I am fragile, so when you pick me, be careful you don't crush me. I resemble my cousin, the blackberry.

Raspberry

2

I am a red fruit. My skin is covered in small seeds. I have a small stem that you have to take off before eating me. People like me because I am so juicy sweet!

Strawberry

3

I am a fruit, but people often use me as a vegetable. I can be green, black, yellow, pink, or orange, but most people know me in my red version. I am the main ingredient in ketchup.

Tomato

4

I am orange. I am often used as a Halloween decoration. I am eaten in soups, pies, gratins, etc.

Pumpkin

5

I am green. I am quite long. I am often eaten with the skin on.

Cucumber

6

You can eat me raw, in salads, or as a cooked accompaniment to any number of dishes. I resemble a small tree. I am green.

Broccoli



7

I grow in the ground. I am crunchy when eaten raw. I can be orange, purple, yellow, or even white. Rabbits really like me!
Carrot

8

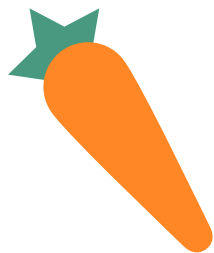
I resemble a grape. I grow in fields or in the woods. I am small and blue.
Blueberry

9

I am white or brown. I have a cap and a small stem. I am also found in the woods.
Mushroom

10

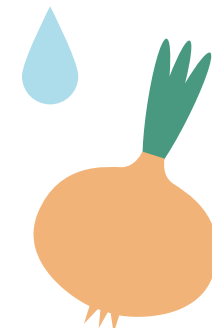
I am a root vegetable. I am red, yellow, green, or white. I often make people cry when they chop me up: sorry, I can't help it!
Onion



BONUS QUESTION
What do all these foods have in common?



ANSWER
They can all grow in a garden!



Bravo! You can now go ahead and fetch water from the reservoir.

Read aloud the following **background information** to pass on to the next step:

Once you arrive at the water reservoir, you need to transfer water into transport containers and bring it back to the garden. Remember: since the water supply is limited, you must make sure you avoid wasting any!

PSST!
Don't forget that your campers will also need water during the activity, just like the garden!



5

Execution

The goal of this second challenge is to take water from the reservoir and bring it to the water collection container without losing a single drop.

Space out your campers at regular intervals along the track, covering the distance between the water reservoir and water collection container.

PSST!

Keep the water used in this activity and use it to water your camp garden, other plants, or trees!

The camper who is closest to the reservoir must pick up a water balloon and throw it to the next participant and so on and so forth until the balloon reaches the last person in line, who will then put the balloon in the water collection container.*

The game ends when the 10 minute countdown is over.

At the end of the game, count the number of balloons. The team that has the most wins. (If you use water glasses, compare the amount of water in each of the containers.)

*If you use glasses, the campers must pour the water in their glass into the glass of the next person in line. You can increase the difficulty of this step depending on how quick your campers are.



GARDENER'S CORNER

Did you know that you can set up containers to collect rainwater? You can even reuse water used in cooking pasta, rice, and vegetables to water your garden. Just make sure the water isn't salty, because too much salt can prove toxic for your plants.



VARIANTS

- You can combine this game with a variant like “**1, 2, 3, SUN!**”. For example, the campers may only move when you say “**GO**”, but must stop moving when you say “**STOP**”. A camper who is still moving when you say “**STOP**” must bring back their balloon to the water reservoir and start over.
- Each camper must transport the balloons while **balancing** them on a **spoon**.
- **Smaller children** can hand off the balloons from one to another instead of throwing them.
- Add **challenges** to the course:



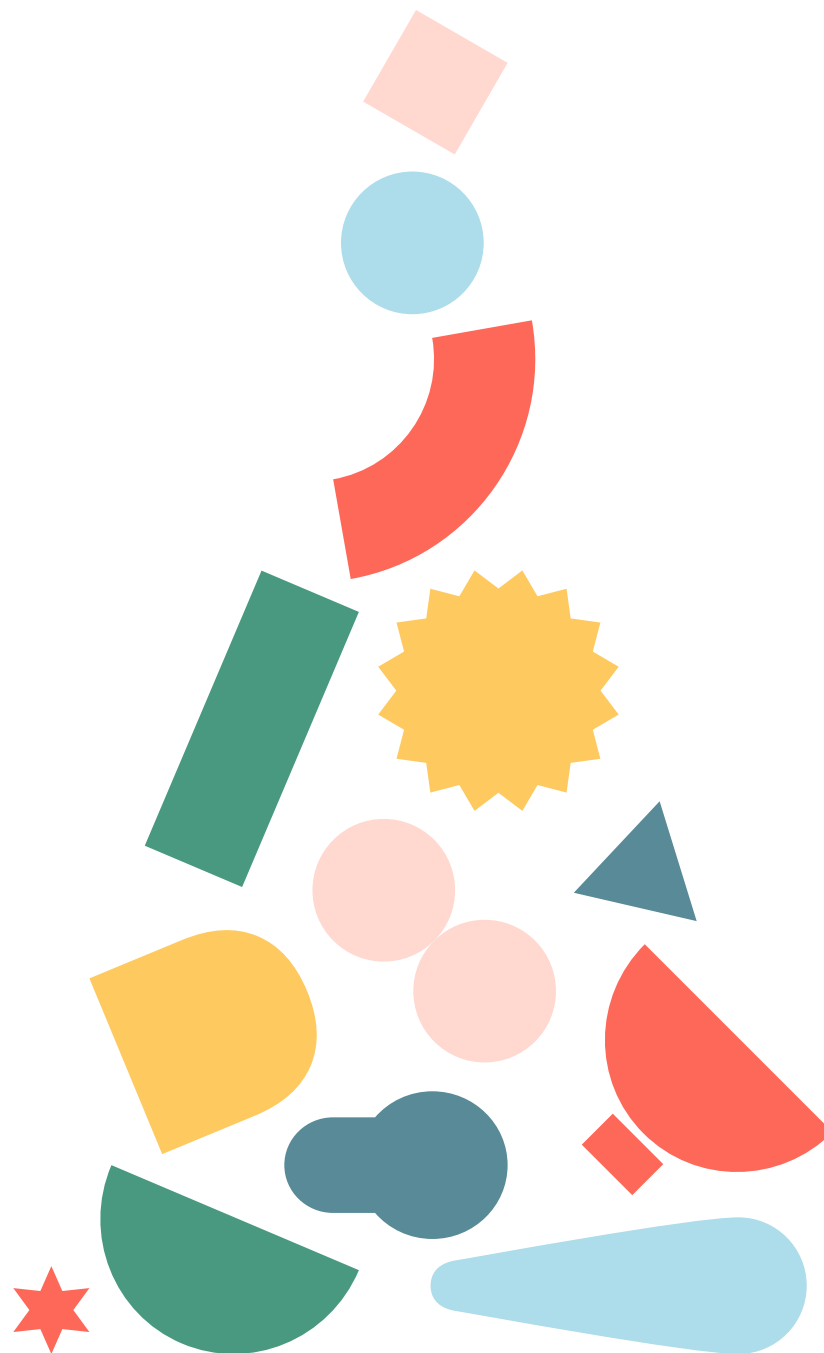
- Perform a jump.
- Do it backwards.
- Turn around before passing off the balloon.

- Take seconds off the timer when **water is wasted** (burst balloon or spilled glass of water).



GARDENER'S CORNER

- When should you water your garden? During the summer, it's better to water the garden either early in the morning or after dinner in order to reduce evaporation and maximize the amount of water absorbed by the plants.
- How should you water the garden? Hold your watering can or hose close to the ground so you don't make holes in it. Be gentle while pouring and keep the water pressure on low (if using a hose).



Wrapping up



Take time to finish up the operation with your group and draw attention to their successes.

Bravo! You have completed all the challenges! The people of Gardenia can now start growing fruits and vegetables in their big garden again!

To show their appreciation, the people of Gardenia encourage you to use your new gardening skills and ...



REWARD IDEA 1

Make a garden at camp

Why not grow plants at camp? Check out the **Gardener's toolbox** on the Power Up portal. It's an incredible resource for helping you get a garden started with your budding gardeners!



REWARD IDEA 2

Do the "I have a green thumb" activity!

Not able to make a garden at your camp? No worries, check out the activity **I have a green thumb** on the Power Up portal for a simple, cost-effective activity to do with your campers.



REWARD IDEA 3

Hold a fruit and vegetable tasting of garden foods!

Introduce your campers to some fruits and vegetables grown in gardens. Check out the activity **Tasting Expert** for tips on how to put on this tasting that will appeal to all five senses!



REWARD IDEA 4

Hold a cooking workshop using garden foods!

Join forces with your campers and cook with ingredients grown in gardens. Check out the activity **Local chefs** for an activity guide as well as recipe ideas!



PSST!

You can draw attention to the efforts of campers who have won both challenges by letting them choose their reward.



Activity recap

Before ending the activity, look back on it as a group and ask your campers questions such as:

What did you like the most or the least about the activity?

→ Name me one thing that you learned.

← Does the activity make you want to garden more?

