GARDEN EXPLORERS

EARLY START
DISCOVERY SPACE

The following activities are linked to the Early Start Discovery Space **'Garden Explorers'** excursion program.

The activities within this guide are designed to further engage children in learning through play and enhance the knowledge and skills developed during their Early Start Discovery Space visit.

Excursion Support Materials

PRESCHOOL EXCURSIONS

Contact Us

Our Education Coordinators are available from 9.00am - 4.00pm, Monday - Friday
via email discovery-ed@uow.edu.au or telephone 02 4221 3777
to discuss your requirements.

OUR LOCATION

University of Wollongong, Main Campus
Ground Floor, Building 21
Northfields Ave, Wollongong, NSW, 2522

Growing plants

EYLF LINKS	MATERIALS
OUTCOME 2: Children are connected to and contribute to their world **OUTCOME 4:** Children are confident and involved learners **OUTCOME 5:** Children are effective communicators	• Images of different facial expressions • Empty yoghurt cups or Styrofoam cups • Cotton wool • Water in spray bottles • Watercress seeds • Markers • Pre-made or image of watercress head • Rulers • Story examples; 'The Seed Song' by Judy Saksie, 'Planting a Rainbow' by Lois Ehlert or 'The Tiny Seed' by Eric Carle. • Images from the excursion

RISKS ASSOCIATED

- Electrical risk – keep water away from sources of electricity
- Student allergies

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Remind children of their visit to the Early Start Discovery Space where they explored a range of plant life and role played how plants grow by using photos taken from the excursion and asking open-ended questions.
2. Read a story about how plants grow.
3. Show children a pre-made (or image) watercress head and explain all children will be creating their own watercress heads.
4. Show children images of different facial expressions and discuss the difference between expressions i.e. what shape does your mouth make when you're happy, sad and scared?
5. Provide each child with an empty yoghurt or Styrofoam container. Ask children to draw a facial expression on their containers. Discuss the expression created i.e. why does your watercress head feel this way?
6. Ask each child to place cotton wool inside the empty containers and dampen with some water. Sprinkle a generous amount of watercress seeds onto the cotton wool.
7. Discuss the best location to keep watercress heads i.e. what would happen if the containers are in a dark area? What would happen if the containers are in a sunny area?
8. Place watercress heads in area decided by children and allow children to water them each day. Children and educators can take images of plants each day and use a ruler to record plant growth rate.
9. In about a weeks' time (and if kept in a sunny spot) the watercress heads should have a full head of hair.

EXTENSION

Children can grow a range of different plants such as beans, alfalfa, peas, avocado etc. Children can compare the similarities and difference between the plant structures such as leaf shape, size and colour and root systems. Additional images and video footage from the Internet can be used to confirm or challenge children's ideas about plants.

How do plants drink water?

EYLF LINKS	MATERIALS
OUTCOME 2: Children are connected to and contribute to their world **OUTCOME 4:** Children are confident and involved learners **OUTCOME 5:** Children are effective communicators	• Images of plants including root systems and leaves • White flowers, cabbage leaves or celery • Food colouring (primary colours – red, blue and yellow) • Water • Small clear cups or containers • Butchers paper • Images from the excursion

RISKS ASSOCIATED

- Electrical risk – keep water away from sources of electricity
- Student allergies

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Remind children of their visit to the Early Start Discovery Space where they took care of a range of plant life in the Discovery Gardens by using photos taken from the excursion and asking open-ended questions.
2. Discuss how plants stay alive. Ask children, 'How do plants drink water?' Record answers on butcher's paper. Images of plants including root systems and leaves can also be used to prompt discussion.
3. Explain children and educators will be doing an experiment to see how plants drink water.
4. Place a white flower into a container of water and red food colouring and observe changes. Ask children the following questions:

   'What is happening?' (white petals are changing to the same colour as the water)

   '**How is it happening?'** (coloured water is travelling up the plant stem)
   Please note educators may be required to re-cut the stem of the flower to speed up the process of the petals changing colour.
5. Repeat experiment with different coloured water i.e. blue and yellow
6. Ask children again, 'How do plants drink water?' Use responses from the first time the question was asked to compare their answers.

EXTENSION

This experiment can be used to explore the difference between primary and secondary colours. Mix two primary colours together in containers that children cannot see through. Ask children to guess what colour the flower will turn i.e. what colour could be made when we mix red and blue together? Also provide children with time to experiment with coloured water by mixing primary colours to make secondary colours.

What are insects?

EYLF LINKS	MATERIALS
OUTCOME 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing **OUTCOME 4:** Children are confident and involved learners **OUTCOME 5:** Children are effective communicators	• Images from excursion • Insect images /figures • Clay/plasticine
RISKS ASSOCIATED	
N/A	

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Remind children of their visit to the Early Start Discovery Space where they explored a range of insect life in the Discovery Gardens. Ask children to name different insects they encountered on their excursion. Images of the excursion can be used as prompts.
2. Explain how children and educators will be making their own insects. To help use images from the excursion and insect figures.
3. Allow children time to explore the insect images/figures. Prompt children with questions i.e. what does this insects body look like?
4. Provide children with clay or plasticine. Educator and children work alongside each other to create insects. Note children can use the images/figures to assist them or create their own insect using their imagination.
5. Children can share their insects with the group. Encourage children to share why they created their insects the way they did i.e. why does your insect have wings? What would the insect use its wings for? Images and video footage from the Internet can also be used to confirm or challenge childrens' ideas about insect features and movements.

EXTENSION

Explore the concept of camouflage by asking children to create a home for their insect. Prompt children to think about the colour of their insect, how the insect moves and what it eats. Reference books and images from the Internet can be used to help children explore what certain insect homes look like. Children can construct their insect homes using recycled material i.e. boxes; cardboard and natural material (leaves and sticks etc). Insect homes can be used to form the basis of an imaginative play area in the room or the playground.

Let's tell a story

EYLF LINKS	MATERIALS
OUTCOME 1: Children have a strong sense of identity **OUTCOME 2:** Children are connected to and contribute to their world **OUTCOME 4:** Children are confident and involved learners **OUTCOME 5:** Children are effective communicators	• Butchers paper • Stones • Markers • Images from the excursion
RISKS ASSOCIATED	
N/A	

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Remind children of their visit to the Early Start Discovery Space where they explored a range of plant life and animal life in the Discovery Gardens.
2. Ask children to think of an animal or plant they saw at the Early Start Discovery Space. Use pictures taken from the excursion or other plant/animal images to prompt discussion.
3. Provide each child with a stone and marker. Encourage children to draw a plant or animal they saw at the Early Start Discovery Space i.e. Ant, spider web, red flower etc.
4. Sit children down in a circle, have the educator start off the story with their stone. Move around with each child continuing on from the story with their stones.

EXTENSION

Display story stones in room and have children create their own stories throughout the week. Record the children's stories by taking photographs, video footage or encouraging children to draw their story on paper. Educators and children can co-construct physical story books using photographs or drawings of the story stones.