

Craft activities – use recycled plastic containers to make plant labels shaped like fruit and veg. Paint with acrylic paint, varnish for a longer life. Cane-toppers can be made from ping-pong balls and turned in to butterflies and other colourful insects. Old cutlery, nuts and bolts, keys, old beads etc can be strung together with wire and nylon fishing line to make wind chimes or bird scarers.



Become a member of The National Allotment Society

Membership of The National Allotment Society comes with a raft of benefits, from discounts on horticultural products through to initial legal advice and horticultural expertise. To become a member visit www.nsalg.org.uk or call **01536 266576**.

Plant propagation – many allotment plants will increase vegetatively so, along with seed sowing sessions, children at your club can produce new plants in a variety of ways. Root strawberries by pinning down the runners in a pot of compost, bend down a blackberry cane into contact with the soil or take soft cuttings to root in jam jars where they can see the roots develop. Plants that root well in water are mint, lemon balm, oregano and the perennial kales.

Scarecrows – Salvaged and recycled materials can be used to make a lively scarecrow. Old broom handles, branches and fence posts for the frame, fixed together with garden twine, cable ties, thin wire, raffia or the trusty duct-tape. Old clothing can be used and stuffed with straw, twigs, plastic bags, shredded paper or worn out fleece and netting from the plot. Painted plastic plant pots, water bottles, stuffed hessian sacks, footballs can make a head. Don't forget the hat! An old colander would look great as a headpiece.

Story time – how about finishing off your gardening sessions with an old-fashioned story session? Lots of books for children focus on the natural world and gardening.

These ideas are a small selection of possible activities with children, there are more in our Children on the Plot leaflet and on our website: www.nsalg.org.uk/growing-advice/how-to-plan-an-allotment/design-a-childrens-allotment/

Further information and activity ideas can be found at

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/naturedetectives/

www.hse.gov.uk/risk/

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service

www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/safeguarding/writing-a-safeguarding-policy/

www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/for-the-public/Fundraising-and-promotions/Fundraising.aspx



O'Dell House, Hunters Road, Corby, Northamptonshire NN17 5JE
T: 01536 266576 • E: natsoc@nsalg.org.uk • www.nsalg.org.uk



Engaging children at Allotment Open Days, Events and Garden Clubs



You do not need expensive resources or to be an expert teacher just lots of enthusiasm and a bit of imagination. Here are some fruit and vegetable-based activity ideas and tips for a successful event.

Before you begin

Make sure that you have adequate Public Liability insurance for your activities. Children will be less careful than adults so take a look around your site and check for hazards such as machinery, poisonous berries or vegetation and ponds, write up a risk assessment that explains how you will limit the risk. It may be necessary to erect warning signs if you have a pond. Access to hand-washing facilities is also important especially if children are able to touch animals or soil that may have been in contact with manure.

Although visitors to the site will be entertained in communal areas its important that your plot-holders are aware that children may be on site and reminded that chemicals and tools should be locked away safely.

If your Association runs a garden club that children attend without a parent you will need to apply for a Disclosure and Barring Service check for the persons running the club and put together a child protection policy. It is important that your volunteers are aware of good practice when working with young people. There are links at the end of this leaflet where you can find further information about this subject from the NSPCC and the Government Information website. You may also get help via your council or local council for voluntary service.



Open Days

Organised activities for children and families at your Open Days are a fun way of not only fundraising but also informing and educating young people about food growing, gardening and the natural world. Try to have a range of activities that suit different ages and most important of all – have fun!



Photo credit: Orkney Branch of the Royal Naval Association

Human fruit and veg machine, you will need cardboard boxes, fruit and veg, 2 or 3 people. With normal fruit machines competitors pay to try to match winning lines of apples, oranges, pears etc. With a human fruit machine, the same principle applies except the fruit or veg are randomly pulled from a box or sack.

Decorate a cupcake with icing and petals

lots of flowers are edible so your cup-cake stall could be an opportunity for children (and adults) to ice and decorate their bun with petals from borage, dianthus, violas, nasturtium, calendula, comflower and flowers from many more allotment grown plants.



Photo credit: kaliskyy@morquefile.com

Mini-beast trail – download and laminate the insect ID sheets from www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/naturedetectives/ there are a selection to suit various age groups. The beasties illustrated can all be found on allotment sites. Encourage families to look together. Alternatively, you could put a sheet together yourself with photographs taken on-site and maybe the prize could be a packet of pollinator friendly seeds.



Photo credit: hotblack@morquefile.com

Snail racing – collect your snails, there will be plenty lurking on site. Draw a large circle on a piece of plastic covered card with a smaller 20cm circle in the centre. Place luscious green vegetation around the outside of the large circle and ten snails in the

smaller circle, winner is the first snail to reach the outer circle. You will need to mark your snails with stickers. Recruit your most outgoing plot-holder to announce the start of the snail racing session and invite people to pay a small fee and choose a snail. Winner takes a percentage of the proceeds for the race. Dispose of the snails humanely.

Pin the seed on the vegetable – an alternative to pin the tail on the donkey. Put up a large sheet of paper with photos or drawings of allotment fruit and veg on to a surface that can take large headed pins. Make some cards that illustrate the seeds, these could be the seeds themselves laminated or photographs with the seeds taped on to show actual size. Invite punters to pin the seed to the plant, have pieces of fruit or tasty raw veg like carrots or radish as prizes.

Match the supermarket veg/tin with the growing plant – If your site has a small demonstration plot it can be used for this ID activity. Have a table next to the plot with bags of supermarket carrots, tins of sweetcorn etc, give each a number. Put an alphabetical marker next to the plants in your plot and provide a marked -up sheet and a pen so that people can put the number ID of the veg on the table next to the alphabetical character of the correct plant in the plot. Correct sheets to be entered in to a prize draw.

Regular Garden Clubs

A regular after-school or weekend morning gardening club gives you more time to spend with interested children and ambitious projects can be put together. However, it's important to remember that fun and play are an essential part of the learning process for many children.

Wormeries and rot-bots – remove the top from clean plastic bottles, fill with layers of compostable materials (remember to mix green and brown), add dampened soil and worms if you want to make a wormery. Cover with an old sock and secure with an elastic band. Put in a warm place (dark if worms are used) and observe the de-composition process. Use the resulting compost to sow a seed and remember to put the worms back where you found them! Consult www.caryoncomposting.com/142941474 for more details.

Insect hotels – it is vital that we teach children the value of beneficial insects that pollinate our food plants and prey on garden pests. Projects to create structures that encourage bees, lacewings, ladybirds etc to over-winter or breed on the plot are a fun way of doing this. Options include a large multi-purpose hotel like the one illustrated here or smaller individual insect homes. A plastic bottle with the top on and the bottom removed can be filled with rolled up thin, corrugated cardboard, secure the card with wire and hang up to attract lacewings. Teapots filled with kapok or moss and buried with the spout protruding can offer a bumble-bee a home and there are many types of solitary bee that will be attracted to bamboo or cardboard tubes in a box. The tubes should be at least 15cms deep and the box should have an overhang to keep off the rain, put the bee home in a dry but cool place for the winter.

