

The scented garden

Enhancing your continuous provision

Creative area



- 1 Provide clean cotton buds for dipping in paint to create beautiful plant paintings. Display potted plants or individual stems for close observation and ask 'Can you mix the paints to make the colours you need?'
- 2 Display a variety of packaging for different cosmetic products. Leave sticky labels for children to design a label for their own brand of perfume or cosmetic and attach to a bottle. Children can be as imaginative as they like even if their perfume does not have the best scent or a desirable effect!
- 3 Leave a selection of plastic or clay flower pots, different paints, PVA glue, paper and paste. Display the sign 'What is the best way to decorate the pots?'

Mathematics area



- 1 Provide children with measuring cylinders or jugs that have graduations in millilitres. Display the sign 'How much water have you given to the plants?' alongside a recording sheet for the children to complete.
- 2 Sow fast-growing seeds such as nasturtiums, peas, sweetpeas and radishes for the children to observe, measure and record their height on a table or chart. Display questions such as 'Which plant is growing the fastest?' or 'Which is the tallest seedling today?'
- 3 Provide real flowers or print out pictures of flowers for children to sort into Venn or Carroll diagrams. Children can select their own criteria such as colour, number of petals or size.

Writing area



- 1 Gardening glossary! Leave a blank word processing page open on a laptop or computer. Encourage the children to add any tricky topic words and their meanings as they come across them. Display a reminder to save their work regularly.
- 2 Provide cut out flowers with blank petals for children to write on to describe what they enjoy about being in the garden. Use them to create a display.
- 3 Display a range of topic words and provide bordered paper and mini books for writing garden-themed stories, poems or non-chronological reports.

Reading area



- 1 Create a garden-themed reading area with artificial grass, trellis, butterflies, flowers, plastic pots, animal puppets, trugs full of information books, storybooks, garden-themed poems and gardening magazines. Provide an outdoor reading area using real plants, if there is suitable cover.
- 2 Provide laptops in the reading area for children to find out more about plants and gardens. Leave sticky notes for children to note down any amazing facts they find and display them for others to read.
- 3 Leave a selection of non-chronological reports for children to read, alongside a checklist of report features. Leave coloured pens for them to annotate the reports, highlighting report features and topic words.

Role play area



- 1 Set up Jack's garden, complete with a large picture of a cow and some beans in a pot. Each day, add to the 'growing' beanstalk until it has grown around the room. Eventually, replace the garden with the Giant's castle!
- 2 Set up a busy florist's shop complete with buckets of artificial flowers, sheets of wrapping or tissue paper to wrap up bouquets, a till, price lists, aprons, gloves, labels, a phone and a variety of vases and containers. Display images of wedding flowers and other floristry for inspiration.

Malleable area



- 1 Provide real sunflower heads or scatter a tray with a mixture of horticultural gravel and sunflower seeds. Provide tweezers to pick out and transfer the seeds into labelled potting trays filled with compost or coffee grinds. Display the sign 'Can you sow a row of sunflower seeds?'
- 2 Leave out the recipe and ingredients for the children to make small amounts of their own scented play dough to sculpt into plants and flowers.
- 3 Provide a range of natural materials and fine modelling tools. Leave balls of clay for children to roll into slabs then sculpt and decorate with floral and leaf patterns.

Construction and small world area



- 1 Line a Tuff Tub with turf. Add pebbles, a pond area and small world figures, vehicles and animals. Add real or artificial flowers to give it a garden feel.
- 2 Provide a wide range of plastic plant pots for stacking, balancing and building structures. Display a different challenge every few days such as 'Can you build a tower that is taller than you?'

Outdoor area



- 1 Provide strips of coloured ribbon, artificial flowers, garden twine and twisty wire for the children to weave into garden trellis or netting.
- 2 Set up a plant potting station. Put seeds, plastic pots and children's gardening tools in a large tub of compost. Display potting instructions for children to follow and provide lollipop sticks and pens for labelling.
- 3 Provide a tray of pebbles, lollipop sticks, clay, old wooden spoons, plastic bottles, scissors and a variety of pens, paint and glue. Let the children use the materials to make plant labels, using writing or images to show what is being grown in the garden.

Investigation area



- 1 Ask the children to sow cress seeds in sand, compost, cotton wool, coffee grinds, gravel and clay. Encourage them to observe the seeds regularly to investigate germination and growth and to record results.
- 2 Fill mystery smelly boxes with different scented flowers and herbs such as rose petals, lavender, rosemary, jasmine and mint. Provide matching cards for children to use as labels for the boxes and provide sorting hoops for likes and dislikes. Encourage the children to add to the investigation by bringing in their own smell boxes.
- 3 Label containers with the words: stem, leaves, flowers and roots. Ask the children to use scissors to dissect different plants and sort the plant parts into the right containers.

Sand and water area



- 1 Provide A4 trays filled with sand, a wide variety of leaves, fine tools and water. Let the children dampen the sand and experiment with marks and tools to create images of leaves. Photograph the work and display.
- 2 Leave a selection of herbs, petals and scented leaves next to the water tray. Provide a variety of bottles, jugs, mixing bowls, and water. Children can experiment with making perfumes, adding small amounts of food colouring to see which perfume smells and looks the best.