

Planting & Growing Activities

Growing Leeks Collage

The children will be making a collage to represent what leeks need to grow.

The activity can easily be adapted to the recycled/spare materials that you have around.

They will be creating sunshine, clouds and rain, and soil. Finally they can cut out and plant their leeks in the perfect habitat they have created. If you wish to make this a collaborative piece of work, we have also provided some suggestions for labelling the work to extend the learning activity.

You can ask the children to create their collage in whichever order works for the materials you have, but remember to save planting the leeks until last.

When they have created an inviting environment, the children can cut out the leeks and add them to the picture.

As each component is completed it's important to talk to the children about why each is needed to grow vegetables, as this will help them to care for their own leeks.

We have also included some labels that you may wish to complete if you are making a display for your space. This will provide a great backdrop to your growing seedlings and also as a visual guide for the children as to how to care for their growing plants.

Suggested materials:

Alongside your usual non-toxic glue and paints or crayons, you will need...

- Paper or card for children to work on – A4 is fine; the inside of old cereal boxes work well. For a display, children could work to create a larger collage on spare wallpaper or lining paper rolls, or you could simply mount them together.
- Sunshine can easily be created with paint/crayons, tissue paper, milk bottle/juice carton tops, or a mixture of what you have at hand.
- Clouds look fantastic made from cotton wool or old packaging like spent bubble-wrap. Paint is equally effective.
- Rain can be painted on; mixing a little glue in will give a lovely wet look!
- Otherwise recycled tin foil or cleaned wrappers, or even painted spaghetti look fantastic. If you are starting your seeds inside then you may wish to also use a watering can picture.
- There are so many ways to create soil, from sand to pasta to rice, glued on and painted or left natural. Old brown envelopes make a nice scrunchy alternative, or shredded cardboard packing is often used for delicate items in the post and glues on easily.



Planting Seeds

When planting your leek seeds, you can either start the seeds outside or in your activity area – whichever best suits your setting. If you don't have outside space, then once the leeks have begun to grow, the children can take them home to continue to nurture them and learn about how we get our food. That is why we have suggested individual containers.

You will need:

Recycled containers to start the seeds in.

We highly recommend old toilet rolls, as they are sturdy enough to move once, but will biodegrade when planted outside, allowing the leek to continue to grow without disturbing the roots. They can be held in place with any plastic trays from food, or similar.

Soil. Fine soil is preferable, and you can use plain soil from the garden enriched with a little compost, or a bag of potting compost will work just as well and give you plenty left over to plant the seedlings out.

A measure. It's best to use an object that the children are familiar with – if they are learning number using a number line or blocks then this can work well as a physical measure. If not then perhaps encourage them to use the tip of their little finger as a measure of roughly 1cm.

Method:

- Place soil in large container and make sure the children have their overalls on and sleeves rolled up!
- Line up toilet rolls in a recycled base container so that they are packed tightly enough to hold each other up.
- Let the children fill the toilet rolls $\frac{3}{4}$ full with soil.
- Using their chosen measure, the children need to make a small hole in the soil in each toilet roll.
- Drop one or two seeds into the hole in the top of each roll, and cover lightly with soil.
- Water gently and wait with baited breath for the seeds to grow.

Suggested activities:

- We have provided a watering chart for you to laminate and complete weekly.
- For the youngest children you may wish to provide them with their name or picture to stick into the helper column when it's their turn.
- Markmaking – tick or cross for activity completed or observed.
- Counting – older children may wish to record the number of seedlings in the growing column.

How are leeks grown and harvested?

For this activity, you simply need to open the PowerPoint whilst connected to the internet and the link will take you to a short video.

What do leeks need to grow?

This worksheet-based activity is designed to help children consolidate their understanding of the natural world.

Before starting the activity, recap using the collages or displays of what leek seeds need to grow. Encourage the children to use their previous work as a guide and to talk through their choices together and with you.

Suggested activities:

- print off our worksheet if your group is confident at mark-making
- complete it together on screen as a class activity for less confident children
- combine children in small groups or pairs to complete activity and observe as an informal assessment of understanding.