



# Gardening with Kids

**Guide for Parents**



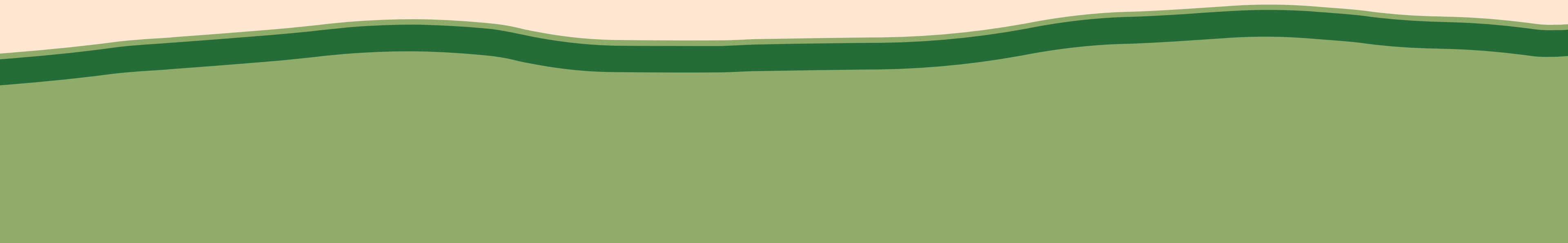
GLOBAL CLIMATE Pledge





# Welcome!

This educational guide  
explores the why, what, and  
how of gardening with kids.





# OVERVIEW

1. Importance (WHY)
2. Materials (WHAT)
3. Engagement (HOW)





# Importance

Gardening is a great activity for all ages!

By joining hands to create something and navigating the learning process together, you're able to bond with your kids through quality time.

Gardening teaches kids about nature, sustainability, environment, patience, and food appreciation.

# Educational Benefits

1

Gardening helps kids understand the earth's processes:

1. An immediate and interactive example of how food is grown
2. A deeper understanding of where food begins and how it grows
3. Opportunities to discuss agriculture and the environment

2

Gardening presents opportunities to teach kids important scientific concepts:

1. Why do plants need sun?
2. How does the plant 'drink'?
3. What are roots?

# Educational Benefits

1

Gardening helps kids learn important math concepts every day:

1. Understanding the practical application of addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and how to use a ruler

2

Gardening enhances your child's imagination:

1. Learning new things and observing growth and change
2. Imagining what the plants will look like fully grown
3. Deciding the layout of the garden

# Health Benefits

1

Gardening ensures they'll be eating healthy, nutrient-filled food:

1. Harvesting fresh from your garden allows your food to fully ripen on the vine, meaning that the nutrients in your vegetables have fully developed
2. Children are more likely to eat veggies they've grown

2

Gardening teaches kids about the importance of nutrients and healthy diets:

1. Kids develop a general understanding of nutrients
2. Open up a discussion about what's healthy and why, including what a well-balanced diet looks like

# Health Benefits

1

Spending time outside in fresh air is essential for kid's development:

1. Increases Vitamin D
2. Soil contains a special kind of bacteria called *Mycobacterium Vaccae* that can alleviate symptoms of psoriasis, allergies, and asthma

2

Gardening is a way to keep kids active and exercising:

1. The activities involved in gardening- pushing a wheelbarrow, digging soil, watering plants, carrying tools and bags of fertilizer- keeps kids off the couch and on their feet



# Emotional Benefits

1

## Gardening relieves stress:

1. Research indicates that gardening has a calming effect on the brain that extends beyond the actual act of gardening
2. Researchers found significant decreases in cortisol in participants who gardened

2

## Gardening improves focus and memory:

1. Consistent involvement in gardening can contribute to improved alertness, cognitive abilities, and social skills
2. Symptoms of ADHD are relieved by outdoor gardens, helping children focus both while they garden as well as later in the day

# Emotional Benefits

1

Gardening promotes communication between family members and encourages meaningful relationships:

1. The time spent gardening with your child is a time when they can ask you questions
2. Kids develop social skills, sympathy, and secure emotional intelligence

2

Gardening helps kids develop an early understanding of input and output:

1. If you don't water the plant, it dies; If you take care of it, the plant produces fruit
2. Gardening is clear: you reap what you sow; a life lesson that's easy to understand for young ages.

# Self Confidence Benefits

1

**Gardening teaches the importance of patience:**

1. The process of tending a plant and seeing it bloom or produce food takes time and patience, but the payoff in satisfaction is equal to the investment

2

**Gardening helps make children feel more capable:**

1. Gardening helps build a child's sense of competence as they engage in a real-life activity that they might have previously seen as only for adults

# Tailoring Gardening to Age

**Choose activities that suit your child's age:**

Watering the garden; Digging; Picking flowers; Planting vegetables, fruits, and flowers in the correct season; Feeding worms and using a worm farm as fertilizer; Picking vegetables and fruits when they are ready to eat; Preparing healthy food; Craft activities using harvested seeds, plants and flowers; Composting; Recycling; Mulching; Weeding; Gathering seeds and dried flowers; Deadheading flowers; Preparing the soil with organic fertilizer; Replanting and repotting



# Different Activities for Different Ages

Toddlers, preschoolers, primary-schoolers, and older children will all have different expectations and will learn different tasks in the garden

## \* Younger Children

1. Require careful supervision during activities
2. Tasks for younger children: watering plants, harvesting produce, and planting seeds

## \* Older Children

1. Physically and mentally capable of handling a greater variety of activities
2. Tasks for older children: digging, carrying, planting, mulching, and pruning

# Materials

Providing smaller gardening tools that are appropriately designed for your kids will make it easier for you to introduce them to gardening

Gardening with kids means that you must invest in a set of tools that are appropriate for them

---

---

---

Although it would be easy to find tools that work well for you and your kids, choosing what you actually need could be more challenging

---

---

---





# Basic Gardening Tools You'll Need

## GLOVES

1. Keeps hands from getting dirty when working on the garden
2. Protects kids from getting a thorn or splinter while they work

## SHEARS

1. Needed for the maintenance of fully grown plants
2. Guide your kids on how to use them for safety to avoid injuries

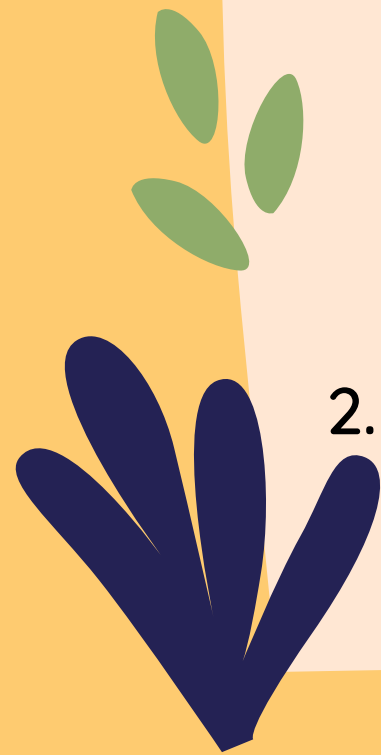
## HANDRAKE

1. Lets you loosen the soil to give freshly planted seeds room to breathe
2. Full-sized rakes are difficult for kids to use, so hand rakes are a great alternative

# Basic Gardening Tools You'll Need

## WHEEL BARRROW

1. For a new garden, you will need to transport soil and compost around the garden
2. Allows for easy transport of everything you need



## HOSE AND NOZZLE

1. A good hose is an important investment
2. A nozzle helps regulate the water pressure on your plants



## HANDHELD SHOVEL

1. Works for digging small holes or fighting off weeds
2. Takes care of miniature jobs that do not need a full-sized shovel







# Types of Gardens

---

Choosing which gardening style to use is a great opportunity to teach your kids about different types of gardens

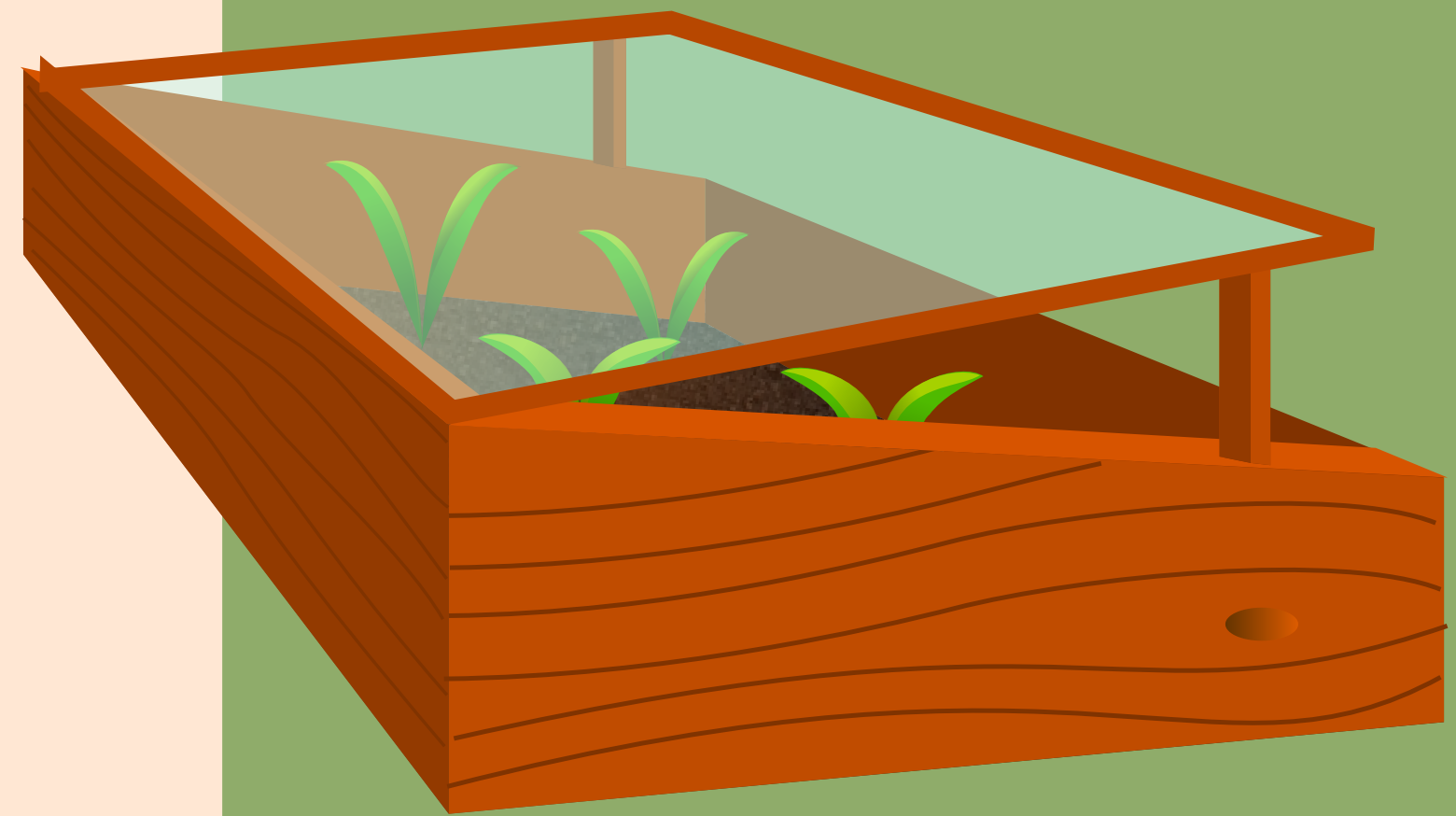
Talk to your kids about which type is best suitable to your climate, ecosystem, and lifestyle

Be sure to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each so that your kids can pick a suitable choice

# Container Gardens

Container gardening — growing plants in pots or raised beds — is a simple alternative to planting them in the ground.

The container can be anything that is enclosed, small, and usually portable, such as a box, tub, basket, tin, hanging basket, or barrel.



# Pros and Cons

## PROS

Off the ground, so there's less strain on your body as you work

---

Better drainage, so it's suitable if your region has higher precipitation

---

They are easier to keep warm during the cold months because you could place them anywhere

---

## CONS

Can be costly, challenging to work in, and hard to work with machinery

---

Lack of space for root development and requires frequent watering and fertilization

---

Waterlogging and sudden change in soil pH are also common with container gardening

---

# In-Ground Gardens

In-ground gardens are planted in the ground and require less preparation because there's no need for a specialized building.

They are customizable to your unique yard conditions and allow you to get creative with a variety of plant options, layout options, and more.



# Pros and Cons

## PROS

They hold water for long periods of time, so they're better suited for drier climates

---

New ground plots typically have lots of nutrients, so your first garden will have plentiful resources

---

Cheaper to start working with since you don't have to build anything to start

---

## CONS

If the soil is too acidic or alkaline, then it will need to be amended to get to the optimal range

---

Your soil type -rocky, sandy, or clay soil- can present challenges

---

They're strenuous to work on since you will have to bend most of the time

---



# Vegetable Garden

A small garden where vegetables, herbs, and fruit are grown for household use.

A vegetable garden can be in the ground or in a planting bed, but it doesn't have to be. Vegetables are a fun way to teach kids about gardening, nutrition, and food sources.



# Pros and Cons

## PROS

Home-grown vegetables require less energy to produce, package, and transport than those bought in stores

---

There are plenty of planting options to choose from – can have an extensive or tiny amount of produce

---

They teach kids about food sources and nutrition

---

## CONS

They can be more technical and a possible let-down if the garden doesn't produce the intended vegetables

---

Pests and foraging animals can damage crops easily, sometimes leading to massive crop loss

---

Veggie gardens take quite a bit of time and effort to create and maintain

---

# Flower Garden

A flower garden is a plot of land where flowers are cultivated and displayed.

Flower gardens are usually produced for visual and aromatic enjoyment, providing you with a serene and relaxing environment to appreciate and care for in your spare time.





# Pros and Cons

## PROS

Kids love flowers, and it can be fun to let them pick out the seeds so they get a say in the design and layout

---

You can easily dedicate a small plot of your garden or create a raised planter for your kids to plant their own flowers

---

They're great for pollinators (bees and butterflies) since they collect pollen while retrieving nectar

---

## CONS

Flowers produce pollen, and some flowers can cause allergies, especially in the spring and summertime

---

Flower gardens are pretty to look at, but they don't have much functionality other than aesthetics

---

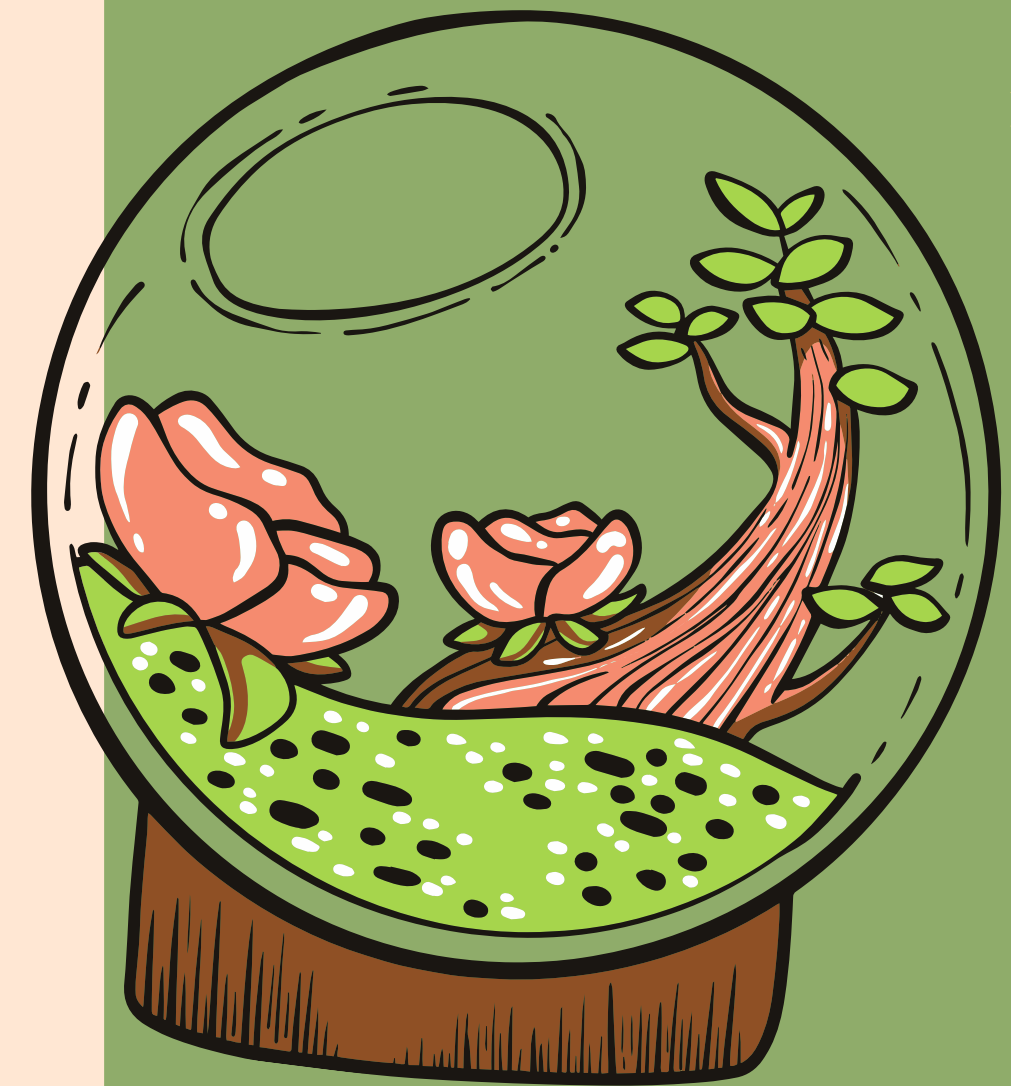
Some flowers self-seed to repopulate, spreading seeds to other areas where they're not intended to be

---

# Terrariums

Terrariums are miniature gardens, housed inside small – and usually sealable – containers like bottles and jars.

As fully functioning plant ecosystems, they're mostly self-sustaining, with the plants watering themselves through transpiration and condensation.



# Pros and Cons

## PROS

Terrariums are perfect for kids that might not want to be/might not be ready to be responsible for a large garden

---

They are low maintenance, small, and simple, so they're a great way to ease kids into gardening

---

Their seal keeps bugs inside and holds in the humidity and heat

---

## CONS

Being exposed to straight sun or being revealed to too much heat can destroy plants inside

---

Sealed terrariums are more likely to mold as there is no airflow in or out the container

---

Once water gets inside the terrarium, it is extremely hard to get it out

---

# Fairy Garden

A fairy garden is a miniature garden with structures and living plants.

Fairy gardens can fit anywhere, so don't worry if you don't have a ton of space in your yard.

You can use anything for their structures, such as building little houses out of sticks and twigs and leaves.



# Pros and Cons

## PROS

There is no limit for kids' creativity, and they allow them to create magical spaces they can play in as well

---

Kids can put them in planters, a regular garden, or in and around tree trunks/stumps

---

Most kids love fairy gardens cause they are a combination of toys and plants

---

## CONS

Most fairy gardens are small, so there isn't much to actually garden; they would best suited for younger children

---

Since there are small pieces involved in fairy gardens, they can be easily lost or messed up by weather/kids/pets

---

Small pieces might not be safe around young children or pets

---



# Plant Selection

When choosing which plants to use, consider using varieties of plants that have sensory and textural qualities your child may enjoy.

Large, brightly colored flowers and vegetables that grow quickly are great options to get your child excited about the gardening experience.



# The 5 Senses of the Garden



**Touch:** woolly lamb's ear, succulents, bottlebrush species, snapdragons

**Taste:** basil, strawberries, peas, rosemary, carrots, cherry tomatoes

**Smell:** jasmine, sweet peas, lavender, pelargoniums, mint bush, lemon balm

**Color:** daffodils, rainbow chard, marigolds, pansies, sunflowers

**Sound:** corn, bamboo, grasses (rustle against each other when the wind blows)







# Engagement

---

Keep it simple when it comes to engaging your child in gardening.

Encourage your kids to dig in the dirt and get involved.

Visit community and botanical gardens as a family to get ideas for your garden, such as adding bird bath, sun dial, or scarecrow.



# Tips for Engagement

## Give them real tools

Giving them a visual representation of their responsibility is confidence-boosting and focusing

## Start from seeds

Starting from seed squares gives your kid an opportunity to see the growing process in its entirety

## Involve the family

Seeing older siblings and parents invested in the growing process will encourage them to stay engaged



# Tips for Engagement

## Give them responsibility

Let them plant, water, harvest, and help cook the produce in the kitchen; provide a direct garden to table link

## Show off their work

Showcase your kid's fruits and vegetables to friends, families, and neighbors





## Provide their own space

Give kids their own section of the garden to manage or start them off with a large container or a few pots



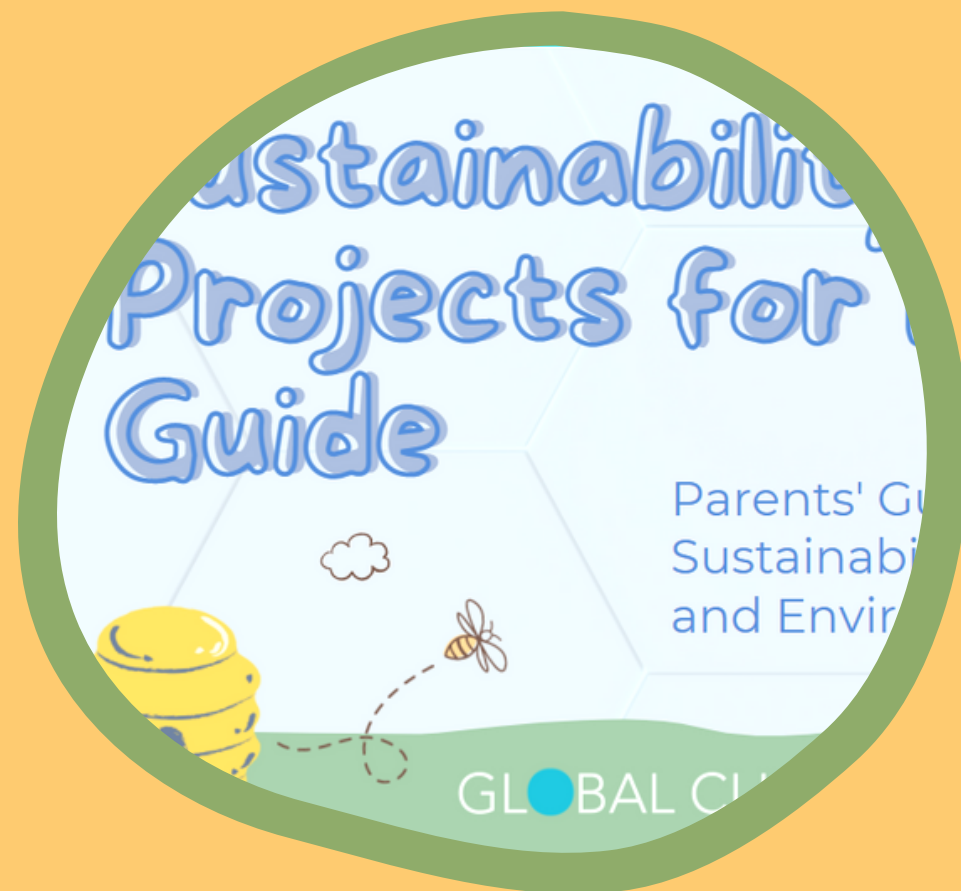


# Child Safety in the Garden

- Use correctly sized tools
  - Keep sprays and fertilizers out of reach
  - Research/limit the use of chemicals
  - Garden organically if possible
  - Store equipment and tools out of reach from children
  - Secure fences and gates
  - Provide shade with umbrellas or hats
  - Don't leave buckets of water unattended around young children
- 
- 
- 
- 



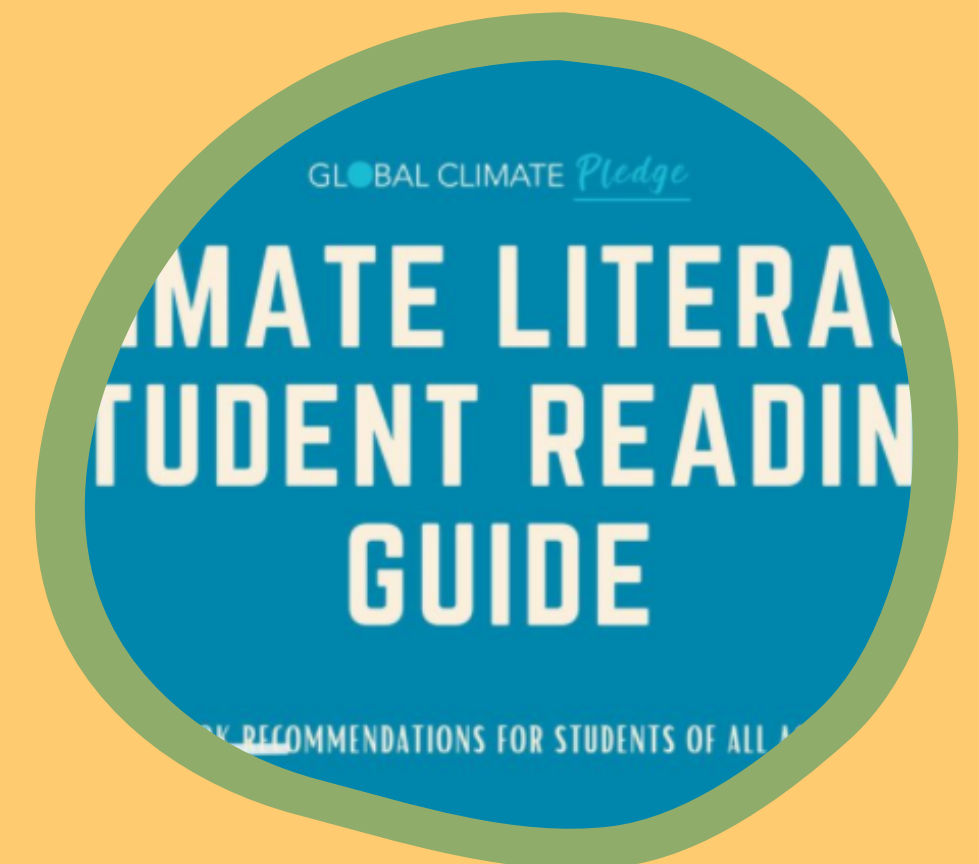
# Additional GCP Resources



[Sustainability Projects](#)



[Environmental Racism](#)



[Climate Literacy](#)

# Thank You!

Want to take a step to make a difference?  
Sign the Pledge! With simple and customizable goals for both individuals and businesses, it makes it easy for everyone to help reduce their impact on the environment and promote more sustainable living for all.

Visit our homepage, where you can learn more about the Pledge and sign!

GLOBAL CLIMATE *Pledge*