

# Ideas for Children's Gardens by Sarah Newman

Compiled by Sarah Newman of Wonderland Gardening



You and your child can create imaginative gardens together, then spend time exploring and enjoying their treasures. Here are some whimsical ideas to try in your yard:

## Alphabet Garden

Grow an alphabet garden, with a plant for each letter of the alphabet: A – Aster, B – Bachelor's Button, C – Cockscomb, D – Daisy, E – Echinacea, F – Forget-Me-Not, G – Gladiolus, H – Hollyhock, I – Iris, J – Johnny-jump-up, K – Kale, L – Lamb's Ear, M – Marigold, N – Nasturtium, O – Obedient Plant, P – Petunia, Q – Queen Anne's Lace, R – Rose, S – Sunflower, T – Tansy, U – Ursinia, V – Verbena, W – Wormwood, X – Xeranthemum, Y – Yarrow, Z – Zinnia

## Barnyard Garden

Grow a garden with plants whose names relate to a farm: Colt's Foot, Bee Balm, Pussy Willow, Cornflowers, Cowslip, Dogwood, Strawberry, Gooseberry, Chickweed, Goose Grass, Hog Apple, Pig-sty Daisy, Ox-eye Daisy, Milk Maids, Hens-and-chicks, Cowbells, Horseradish, Horehound, Goats Beard. Decorate with a scarecrow, wheelbarrow or old water pump.

## Fairy Garden

Grow a garden of plants with small, bell-like flowers to entice fairies to your yard: lilies-of-the-valley, tiarella, coralbells, ladybells, snowdrops, campanulas. Build a fairy house with your child in the middle of the flowers, using bark, sticks, stones, and moss.

## Mini Vegetable Garden

Grow a miniature vegetable garden in a small plot, with tiny symmetrical rows. Mark with rows with signs made of popsicle sticks with tiny drawings of the plants. Use mini-varieties such as: 'La Belle' (filet beans), 'Little Ball' (beet), 'Planet' (ball-shaped carrot), Cornichons (cucumbers), 'Little Fingers' (eggplant), 'Little Gem' (Romaine lettuce), 'Ruben Dwarf' (Romaine lettuce), 'Summer Baby Bibb' (lettuce), 'Tom Thumb' (lettuce), 'Early Aviv' (onion), 'Barletta' (onion), 'Precovil' (peas), 'Cherries Jubilee' (potato), 'Ronde De Nice' (zucchini), 'Peter Pan Green Scallops' (squash), 'Munchkin' (pumpkin), 'Ruby Pearl' (tomato), Alpine Strawberries, Basil 'Fino Verde Compatto'

## Mini-Flower Garden

Grow a miniature flower garden with tiny flowers such as: Miniature daffodils, Miniature roses, Miniature iris, Grape Hyacinth, Snowdrops, 'Tiny Rubies' Dianthus, Sweet Alyssum. 'Peter Pan' saxifrage, 'Waterberry' Veronica

## A Jack-In-The-Beanstalk Giant's Garden

Surprise your child with a garden of giant vegetables: 'Big Moon' pumpkin, 'Oxheart' tomato,



'Scarlet Imperial Long' carrot, 'Giant Perfection' muskmelon, 'Grey Stripe' sunflower, Scarlet runner beans, 'Walla Walla' onion, Italian parsley, 'Lagenaria' summer squash, 'Zwaan Jumbo' cabbage, 'Aconcagua' pepper, 'Armenian' cucumber, 'Crimson Long' radish

### **Pizza Garden**

Grow a garden with all the ingredients for making pizza. Start by drawing a circle on the ground. Divide it into seven even sections. Mark the edges with large rocks for the crust, and mark the slices with small rocks. One slice is kept unplanted as a pathway. In each section, plant roma tomatoes, green peppers, eggplant, zucchini, cherry tomatoes. In the sixth section, plant herbs, onions, and garlic. Sprinkle marigold and calendulas throughout as "cheese", whose flowers can be sprinkled as flavoring. Throw a pizza party after the harvest.

### **Butterfly Garden**

Create a garden to attract butterflies to your yard. Scratch the shape of butterfly wings in the ground. Edge with stones and lay flat stones for the body. Fill the wings with nectar plants—pineapple sage, lantana, jupiter's beard, hyssop, lavender, coral bells. Plant thyme and chamomile between the stones.

### **Rainbow Garden**

Grow a rainbow with your child. Plant an arch with seven rows of flower varieties which are of equal height: red salvia, orange marigold, yellow marigold, parsley, blue ageratum, and purple petunia. Plant a pot of gold using tiny marigolds, California poppies or "Gold Coin".

## **HIDE-OUTS**

Every child needs a hide-out. Create places in the garden for your child to hide in, play in, and dream in:

### **Teepees**

Lash poles together to create a teepee. Grow runner beans or gourds at the base of the poles. Before long, the vines will cover the teepee to create a leafy retreat.

### **Hollyhock Tent**

Grow a circle of hollyhock plants, spacing them every 12 inches, leaving a space for an entrance. Make sure the circle is wide enough to sit inside with friends. When the hollyhocks are 5 feet high, gather the tops together with twine.

### **Sunflower House**

Mark a 6' x 9' rectangle. Dig a trench around the perimeter. Every 4' along the trench, drop a 'Mammoth' sunflower seed and a heavenly blue morning glory seed together in the trench. In between, plant smaller and medium sized sunflowers every 4". Leave a 2' gap for a door. Cover over the seed, and water. After the 'Mammoth' sunflowers have reached six feet, tie 7' lengths of string to one of the sunflower heads and tie it across the rectangular space joining the sunflower heads. Encourage the morning glories to grow along the strings to make a leafy blue roof for the house.