Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria
Learning Melbourne

Early Childhood Educator’s Kit
Introduction

A visit to the Royal Botanic Gardens is an ideal excursion for early childhood groups and well recognised as an enjoyable, hands-on excursion that meets the needs of children aged three to five years. This experience immerses children in the wonderful sensory and imaginary world of plants while looking at the important role that plants play in our lives.

This booklet provides information, suggested experiences, resources and references that will assist you in preparing for and extending on your excursion to the Royal Botanic Gardens.

Pedagogy

“Surely a garden is not a success if it doesn't bring joy to children.” Edna Walling

The Child as a Learner: Children construct understandings through discovery and exploration. At the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, the capabilities of children are deeply valued. Our goal is to encourage them “to learn with excitement each unique and enchanting day in a unique and inspiring life.” (Kriegl)

Early Years Programs: The early years of life are fundamental in the formation of environmental attitudes. If an appreciation and love for the natural environment is developed in childhood, it will be a lasting one.

Our programs follow integrated teaching and learning approaches outlined in the Victorian Early Years Learning And Development Framework, 2016 (VEYLDF);
- adult led learning
- guided play and learning
- child-directed play and learning

We value partnerships with families and recognise families are the primary influence on children’s learning and development. We also value the cultures, languages, traditions, child-rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families, recognising that diversity contributes to the richness of our society.

Discovery Learning: Children learn through authentic experiences that immerse the senses and stimulate the imagination. Experiences are interactive with opportunities for participation in discovery and investigation.
Pleasurable and Joyous: When children develop a conviction that learning is satisfying and fun, they become lifelong learners. Pleasure, enjoyment, humour and laughter should be a part of each child’s day. We believe that teachers and parents should enjoy their visit also.

Learning and Development Outcomes:

Identity
- children are open to new challenges and experiences
- children openly express their feelings and ideas in interactions with others

Community
- children demonstrate a growing appreciation, care, knowledge and respect for natural environments
- children develop an awareness of the impact of human activity on environments and the interdependence of living things

Wellbeing
- children use their senses to explore and respond to the natural world
- children explore outdoor play spaces to ensure the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others

Learning
- children explore the natural environment and participate in a variety of rich and meaningful inquiry-based experiences
- children use play to investigate, imagine and explore ideas
- children express wonder and curiosity

Communication
- children interact with others to explore ideas and concepts, clarify and challenge thinking, share new understandings related to the Gardens, including simple botanical words and concepts
- children listen and respond to sounds in speech, stories, rhyme and song
Early Childhood Education Programs

Plants and plant-spaces at the Gardens stimulate children’s senses and imagination, broaden their knowledge and invite exploration and adventure. Programs are experience-based, creating connections through gardening, play and stories and directly support the VEYLD. The Ian Potter Children’s Garden is a place where children of all ages and abilities explore the wonders of plants in an interactive, hands-on environment.


Landscapes For Learning
Are you planning a garden or play space at your early learning centre? Would you like the children to be an integral part of the design process? Through the exploration of the plants and landscapes of the Ian Potter Foundation Children’s Garden, children discover how to develop an outdoor play and learning space that can be centred around imaginative play.

Introduction To The Gardens – Christmas and seasonal options available
Use your senses to explore the wonderful sights, seasonal changes and stories of the Gardens and meet the plants and animal that live there. Children pot a plant to take home, make pot pourri in the herb garden and explore garden treasures.

You and Me, Murrawee
This program gives children a greater understanding and respect for Aboriginal culture, in particular the Koolin nation through participating in a smoking ceremony and reading the Murrawee story book by Kerri Hashmi. Children explore indigenous plants, collect plant treasures and use Aboriginal tools. Experiences include grinding and painting with ochre and making a belonging handprint to take home.

Wonderful Water
This sensory program engages children in water conservation and exploring connections between water and living things. Experiences include ponding in the wetland, floating leaves in the rill, and sensory exploration of plant adaptations to hot, dry environments. Children understand that plants need water to grow and pot a seedling to take home.

Food for Life
This program gives children direct experience with plants as the basis of food chains. Check what’s ready for harvest in the Kitchen Garden and plant a seed to take home. Experiences also include investigating the role of worms and caring for your worm farm.
Homes and Hideaways
Explore the ways that plant material can be used as homes, for ourselves and other animals, including as cubbies for us!
Experiences include: Discovery-walk, cubby building, animal observations, sensory exploration of plant material.

Minibeasts
Investigate the creatures we share our garden with, exploring how they live and how they help our gardens grow. Discover why plants attract and repel little creatures.
Experiences include: ponding, worm farm, discovery walk, animal observations, sensory exploration of plants and making a pest repellent pot pourri to take home.

A Garden of Rhythm and Rhyme
Explore the connections between music, sound and plants. Experiences include; responding to the landscapes through movement and music, exploration of plants as instruments and plant-inspired rhymes and stories. The story of ‘The Music Tree’ provides inspiration to make musical mobiles from natural materials.

The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Learning Team also offer Professional Development sessions for early childhood staff. These may be based on the programs regularly offered or can be designed to meet the needs of particular groups.

To make a booking for the selected program contact the Schools Administrator.

Tel: 03 9252 2358 Email: edserv@rbg.vic.gov.au
or visit the website: www.rbg.vic.gov.au/learn

Your centre will receive a confirmation letter, map and general information following your booking.

Payment: An invoice will be emailed to you after the excursion or payment can be made on the day to the bookings officer.
Planning Your Excursion

**Times:** The programs are offered both morning (10.15 am to 11.45am) and afternoon (12.45pm to 2.15pm) each weekday, however most early childhood groups find that the morning is a better time for young children.

**Transport:** Most early childhood groups travel by chartered bus or private car to the Gardens, but it is easily accessible by public transport. From Flinders St Station trams travel along St Kilda Rd to the Shrine of Remembrance, stop 19. Walk across to the Gardens.

**Meeting Point:** Early childhood groups start from the Education Services entry, near the Observatory on Birdwood Avenue, opposite the Shrine of Remembrance.

**Attending parents / carers:** We recognise that families are the primary influence on children’s learning and development, and we aim to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where all families are encouraged to participate in and contribute to experiences that enhance children’s learning. If you would like siblings to attend the program please discuss this with the Schools Administrator at RBGV.

**Students with additional needs:** The sensory focus of the programs is well suited to children with additional needs. If there are children with additional needs in your group please advise at the time of booking. Learning Facilitators will modify the program to cater for individual needs of children. Please refer to [http://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/learn/planyourexcursion](http://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/learn/planyourexcursion) ‘Inclusion and Access Guide’.

**Snack or lunch:** Please ensure that the children bring a snack or lunch and time is allowed for eating and toileting before the commencement of the program.

If the group is having lunch before or after the excursion, the Royal Botanic Gardens Learning Facilitator can advise on appropriate locations close to toilets or shelters as needed. Don’t forget extra drinks in the warmer months.

Please take rubbish away with you, and use the compost bucket provided for worm food.

**Clothing and footwear:** The Royal Botanic Gardens is an outdoor excursion and involves significant walking. Warm, waterproof jackets and woolly hats are important in the cooler months. Also, ensure that from September to April sun protection is a priority. Children should wear protective clothing, legionnaire or broad brimmed hats and SPF 30+ sunscreen.
Toilets: A toilet stop can be incorporated in the program at a convenient location; you can check their location on the map when planning the excursion.

First Aid: It is advisable to come equipped with a basic first aid kit, however in an emergency first aid is available at the Gardens. Contact the Visitors Centre on Tel: 9252 2429.

Rainy days: If the weather is very wet consider cancelling and rescheduling the excursion for another day. Please advise the Schools Administrator ph. 9252 2358, the day before the excursion if possible. However, there are several sheltered areas that can be utilised on rainy days.

Mobile phones: It is helpful to carry a mobile phone in case of emergency, but please remember to turn them off or place them in silent mode during the excursion as they can be distracting for both children and adults.
On your visit to the Royal Botanic Gardens the children will encounter some of the following features and experiences.

- **The Bunya Bunya Pine**, an ancient ‘dinosaur tree’ is a prickly sensory experience. It tells the story of how Aboriginal people used the enormous Bunya Bunya cones as a food source. The cooked seeds taste like hot baked potatoes.

- **Oak Lawn** is a wonderful place to explore the autumn and seasonal change. Over thirty varieties of oak tree shed their leaves and acorns onto the ground in autumn. Children enjoy playing in the leaves, piling them up and rustling through them.

- A wander through **Fern Gully** is an opportunity to experience a rainforest in the city, with its tall trees and closed canopy.

- The **lakes** at the Royal Botanic Gardens give children the opportunity to observe a variety of **waterbirds** including swans, ducks, moorhens and Eurasian coots. Questions for consideration might include: What do they eat? How do they swim? Where do they sleep? The short-finned eels living in the lake are also interesting animals and many children think they are electric eels or snakes.

- Planting a bulb, vegetable seedling or flower seedling is real garden work. Children are encouraged to work independently to plant their own pots, discuss the needs of their plant and interpret plant growth through creative movement.

- The **Herb Garden** is a sensory delight and the best place for making herb bags from a selection of dried herbs. Groups discuss the various uses of herbs and challenge and delight their senses. The Herb Garden is a great place for watching minibeasts including butterflies, bees and ladybirds.
- **Garden treasures** can be collected from the ground. Treasures might include leaves, seed-pods, cones, petals, twigs and flowers and may be taken back to the centre for sensory exploration, sorting, pattern making or scientific investigation.

- The story of the **Lightning Tree** has become a legend! Children gather at the old oak tree to help tell the story of how the tree was damaged years ago by lightning and saved by the gardeners. Some say that the tree now gives you good luck and perhaps fairies live in the many nooks to be explored around the base.
Topics and Experiences

The following list of topics and experiences provides a starting point for early childhood educators wishing to extend on the Royal Botanic Gardens excursion in their own early childhood centre. Each topic is supported by extra information, but look for further information from the reference and resource lists.

Animal and Plant Interactions
The interactions between plants and animals have evolved over millions of years and are essential to sustaining the web of life. There are many examples of animal and plant interactions that can be explored in concrete ways with young children. The following examples relate directly to what children may experience on an excursion to the Royal Botanic Gardens.

- **Bees** can be observed visiting flowers to feed on nectar and collect pollen from the yellow stamens to take back to their hives to feed the bee larvae. Look closely and you can see the full pollen sacks on the hind legs. Try purchasing fresh honeycomb or making honey sandwiches for snack time.

- **Butterflies** also visit flowers to drink the nectar from the base of the flower through their ‘drinking-straw’ haustellum. The haustellum may be seen curled up under the head. Some native plants such as Grevillea, Everlasting Daisies, Riceflowers and Billy Buttons are known to attract butterflies and could be incorporated in the centre playground. Alternatively, a vegetable garden planted early in the year with broccoli or cabbage will attract cabbage-white butterflies. Look for tiny yellowish eggs on the underside of leaves and later, the green larvae.

Remember that the butterfly is simply the adult stage of a life cycle that also includes an egg, larvae (caterpillar) and chrysalis (pupae) stages. These stages can be explored through creative movement, various art media, life-cycle puzzles, sequence cards and puppets. The movement and colours of butterflies can be creatively explored with a basket of colourful scarves and some real or artificial flowers to visit.

- **Silkworms** (the larval stage of silk moths) provide a very specific example of a plant/animal interaction and can be easily reared indoors. Silkworms require no more than a cardboard box and frequent fresh supply of mulberry leaves. Ensure that a fresh leaf supply is readily available before embarking on this experience. Over several weeks
children may observe the eggs hatch and grow into larvae which eventually spin cocoons of silk thread. Provide a magnifying glass next to the silkworms for close observation and a piece of silk fabric for touching. Take photographs of the silkworms development and mount these in a centre album with children’s captions/drawings to reinforce the process of change from egg to caterpillar then cocoon to adult silk moth. When in season eat the delicious mulberry fruits yourselves!

- The interactions between **birds** and plants are numerous. Plants provide food, shelter and nesting materials for birds and in return plants can be pollinated by birds, have their seed dispersed or their insect pests removed. Ensure that your playground includes a selection of bird attracting native plants such as Saltbush, Acacia, Callistemon and Banksia and/or build bird boxes to mount in the trees. Encourage bird observation around your centre by providing, bird field guides, a wall chart of birds, and a bird hide in a quiet, bushy area of the playground and binoculars. Collected feathers and old nests can be added to interest tables with relevant books and pictures or utilised as part of imaginative play scenarios with small bird models and perhaps pebbles as improvised eggs.

- **Humans** interact with plants in a multitude of ways. Discuss with children all the things humans obtain from plants ranging from wooden blocks for building, to food for snack time and shade for sunny days. Making the connection between the things we use daily and plants is basic to understanding the interconnectedness of all living things. Productive experiences such as sanding and polishing a piece of timber, vegetable gardening and planting a tree for shade make the connection more meaningful.
Gardening

Gardening is a delightful and rewarding way to connect with nature for children and adults alike. In early childhood centres gardening experiences may range from simply providing a small watering can for watering pots to a full-scale productive vegetable garden. The type of experience depends on the enthusiasm of staff and practical considerations. Remember to purchase some sturdy good quality child-sized garden tools such as rakes, long handled spades, trowels and watering cans to enhance the experience. Also, consider gardening gloves, gumboots, hats and overalls. See the resource list for suppliers.

- One of the joys of gardening is to eat the produce of your labours. Provide for both spontaneous and planned times in the program for tasting, preparing, cooking and sharing the produce. Children are often unaware of the connection between plants and the food we eat and gardening provides an excellent opportunity for building that connection. Label the plants or pots appropriately to support literacy skills too. Also, take the opportunity to discuss the various parts of plants i.e. roots, leaves, flowers, seeds, fruits, and what plants need to grow i.e. water, nutrients and sunlight.

- **Planting** some bulbs, herbs, vegetables or annual flowers in pots is a good starting point. Children may wish to personalise the pots with their own decorative design prior to planting. Engage the children in the selection of plants, potting and care of pot plants and observe the growth and change over time. Record the changes using a child's diary or photographs. Pot plants have the added advantage of being moveable, so they may be used to delineate play areas indoors or outdoors, to add colour and interest to an imaginative play area, to provide a focus for discussion at interest tables or as aesthetic inspiration at the drawing table or painting easel. Don't forget that pots dry out quickly, so make small watering cans readily available.

- A small-scale alternative to pots is the use of **garden boxes**. These can be purchased ready-made (old fruit or wine boxes lined with plastic and a few holes drilled in the base) or built on site. They provide opportunities for several children to work cooperatively and can be placed at a height suitable for children with special needs who may find garden work at ground level difficult. Appropriately sited garden boxes can be attractive and positive ways of directing foot traffic around the playground. When not growing a garden the boxes can be a place for mud-pie making!
• **A hay bale vegetable garden** is another small-scale, semi-permanent option to consider for the spring and summer months. Construct a rectangular shape on the ground from six or eight hay bales and line the base with thick wet newspaper. Fill with alternating layers of organic material such as compost, manure, shredded paper; grass clippings, straw and leaves. For planting, make small holes in the top layer of straw place a handful of rich soil in each hole and plant your seedling, seed or cutting. Try zucchinis, tomatoes, silver beet, basil, cucumber, lettuce or capsicum. At the end of the growing season the hay bales can be dismantled and spread on the garden for mulch.

• **Construct a tee pee** by lashing three or more tea tree or bamboo poles together at the top. Plant seeds of climbing plants such as climbing beans or peas, cucumber and chokoes at the base of each pole and watch them grow and climb up each pole to create a shady, edible garden cubby. Or grow a sunflower forest and tie the ripe heads together at the top to form a cubby.

• When selecting plants for gardening look beyond the usual food plants to the range of **bush food plants** and food plants from other cultures that are increasingly available from plant nurseries. This is one way the centre can reflect the cultures of the local community. Some suggestions to try include warrigal or wild spinach, kangaroo apple, quandong, pak choi (a type of Chinese cabbage), lemongrass and Vietnamese mint.

• If planting from seeds it can be informative to spend some time exploring the **beauty and diversity of seeds**. Search for and collect the seeds found in the fruit or vegetables regularly eaten at the centre. Provide a variety of small items e.g. beads, pebbles, buttons and seeds for children to sort into seeds and ‘not seeds’. Work with the children to develop a definition of what a seed is and how something can be tested to check if it is a seed or not.
There are many different seed types that can be compared, contrasted and sorted. A magnifying glass, a sorting tray (cardboard egg carton or fruit tray) and plastic tweezers or tongs can be used. Seeds can be planted in soil in egg carton sections, down the side of a clear plastic jar filled with soil or in a sheet of paper towel rolled up and stood in a jar with a little water, to closely monitor their development. Later plant the seedlings outdoors in the garden. Alternatively, grow some alfalfa, lentil or mung bean sprouts from seed and incorporate them into a snack or lunch.

- **Earthworms** are an integral part of gardening experiences as they play a significant role breaking down organic matter into nutrients for plants and aerating the soil with their burrowing. Children will find worms when gardening, so invite gentle exploration of the worms. Feel how moist they are; this allows them to breathe through their skins. Notice how their muscles stretch and contract to facilitate movement and try to identify which end is the head. Perhaps set up a worm farm outdoors, a wormery in a clear sided container indoors (an old aquarium or large canister covered by a dark cloth) to investigate the biology of worms in more detail. Try looking for worm egg capsules that are pale brown and the size of a small rice grain.

- **Water conservation** is an important consideration when gardening. Remember to water in the early morning or late afternoon to minimise evaporation. When selecting plants choose those requiring least watering and always apply mulch. Whenever you have clean wastewater e.g. water play trough, leftovers from snack or washing equipment, tip it onto the garden. Discuss these practices with the children and visit the Water Conservation Garden in the Royal Botanic Gardens for more planting ideas.

- **A word on garden ‘pests’**. Some organic gardeners suggest there is no such thing as a garden pest, but that it is an indication of an imbalance between the herbivores (plant-eaters such as aphids, mealy bugs, spider mites) and carnivores (meat-eaters such as ladybirds, praying mantis, lacewings, spiders) in the garden. Discuss the dilemma of pests eating the plants and how the situation might be resolved with the children. Consider the use of physical barriers against snails and slugs such as milk cartons, ash or straw try companion planting or investigate remedies made from soap or garlic. Consult organic gardening references or check at your local plant nursery for specific advice.
Plants: a sensory resource

Can you recall your favourite plant and why you like you like it? Sensory experiences with plants can be evocative, aesthetic, creative, memorable and stimulating in many ways. Provide a variety of plant-related experiences to ensure that children have opportunities to build their repertoire of sensory experiences with plants.

• Simply arranging and creating patterns with plant materials such as pods, petals, bark pieces and leaves can be an absorbing sensory experience. The pattern-making might emerge spontaneously on a flat tree stump, a section of pavement or a smoothed area of sand or mud, or it could be planned by providing an assortment of materials arranged in baskets and a plain coloured board or piece of fabric. These patterns or temporary collages may develop in representative ways or be elaborated with story telling. Alternatively, try making patterns by pressing plant shapes such as pinecones or gum nuts onto clay or damp sand. Rather than pasting or gluing them, keep them for further investigation.

• Beautiful smelling herbs and plants can be added to various play experiences. For example, a vase of dried lavender in domestic dramatic play areas, eucalypt tips as pretend food for koalas in imaginative play, small cuttings to plant in pots at a dramatic play plant nursery, a basket of fragrant petals to float in a water dish, a carpet of gum leaves as a backdrop to dramatic play about camping, sprigs of rosemary to be planted as small trees in a sand tray, a pot of hyacinths on an interest table with some bulbs, dried petals, leaves or fresh grass for pretend soups and witch's potions ...

• Plants are colourful! Colourful fabric, paper and cardboard can be added to collage areas. Try matching colour swatches or children's clothes to plants in the garden. Explore the many shades of green by providing yellow and blue powder paint colours. Display books and photographs which highlight the colours of plants. Large pieces of fabric in colourful flowery designs can be used to build cubbies, make tablecloths or costumes. Collect graded colour samples from curtain shops and match leaves, bark, pods, fruits or petals to the colours. Make fabric dyes from plants e.g. onion skins or red cabbage. Prepare a colourful plate of salad from carrots, tomato, beetroot, green pepper, cucumber, radishes etc.

• Plants create sounds. Often musical instruments are made from dried fruits or seed pods e.g. gourds, rain sticks, try rubbing a stick on a pine cone, listen to the wind in the trees, make a whistle sound with a folded mirror-bush leaf, jump into a pile of crisp autumn leaves ......

• During rest or quiet times select some environmental music by Peter Mumme, Ken Davis or Tony O'Connor to help create the
atmosphere of various habitats. According to the music imagine the birds in a rainforest; wind in the trees or a thunderstorm in the mountains.

- **Cooking and eating** various herbs, vegetables and fruits is an important sensory experience. Try tasting different varieties of the same fruit or vegetable e.g. apples, pears, pumpkins. Or taste a particular fruit or vegetable raw and cooked in different ways e.g. potatoes, apples, peas, beans, pumpkin, and use herbs to make pizza, salads, pasta sauce, soups etc.

### Plants with a difference

Some plants are a little different from the stereotype green leafy type and require special investigation. The examples below may be observed in the Royal Botanic Gardens.

- **Mosses and lichen** are very small plants found growing on trees and rocks and are best explored *in situ* with a magnifying glass. Mosses are very simple plants and reproduce by spores while lichens are actually two plants, algae and fungi, living together in a symbiotic relationship. These ‘fairy gardens’ may provide the backdrop for imaginative play.

- **Mushrooms** are not plants or animals! They are fungi. They grow on other rotting material and the mushroom we observe is the fruiting body or flower equivalent. They may grow spontaneously in autumn in the playground, but remember many types are poisonous and should not be handled or eaten by children or adults. Look but don't touch is the safest approach. For edible mushrooms try growing a mushroom box which can be purchased at a plant nursery or simply purchase a variety of fresh mushrooms at the supermarket to observe and taste. Make a mushroom spore print by leaving a mature mushroom, gill side down overnight on a white sheet of paper.

- **Carnivorous plants** can be observed in the hothouse at the Royal Botanic Gardens. Carnivorous plants such as pitcher plants, sundews and venus flytraps feed on the insects that are trapped by their specialised leaf structures. Try growing a carnivorous plant indoors to catch insects.

- **Succulents or cacti** survive in extreme environments by storing water in their thick, fleshy stems and utilising a range of adaptive water conservation strategies e.g. a thick waxy coating, reflective hairs, a large volume to surface area ratio. They range from very small stone-like plants to the large ‘tree’ cacti. Try growing some succulents in pots and discuss how plants adapt to their environment.
• **Cycads** are very ancient trees classified in a group of their own. Despite their palm-like fronds they are not related to palms. The large seed bearing cones of the cycads were a food source for dinosaurs, and cycads are often depicted in children’s picture reference books about dinosaurs. Small potted cycads (without cones) can be purchased from plant nurseries and added to an interest table or imaginative play about dinosaurs. The cycad seeds are poisonous to humans, however Aboriginal People are able to treat the seeds to make them edible. This point could also lead to further exploration of indigenous foods and/or consideration of poisonous plants.

**Plants Change**

**Time** is an abstract concept and a difficult one for young children to grasp. Plants offer many opportunities to explore time in relation to growth, seasons and daily response to sunlight.

Some plants are **annual** e.g. primulas, pansies, nasturtiums and basil grow only in a particular season, others are **perennial** e.g. geranium, lavender, agapanthus, grevillea, and grow all year round.

**Growth** can be measured directly by comparison between the plant and a child or objects at hand e.g. Where do the broad beans come up to on your body? How many blocks high are the sunflowers? Photographs collected and arranged in an album over a season or year of growth is another way of developing a sense of change over an extended time period.

• The **connection between flowers and fruits or vegetables** is not always obvious to children, so take time to investigate plants that are flowering then fruiting. Usually you will be able to find flowers and fruits at various stages of development to illustrate how the fruit or vegetable forms at the flower base, then the flower withers away. Beans, peas, zucchini, tomatoes and fruit trees are good to use for this purpose.

• The **seasons** are reflected in the changes in plants around us, and two of the Royal Botanic Gardens early childhood programs focus on seasonal change. Apart from recognising deciduous and evergreen trees and new growth, discuss with children the other seasonal changes in the weather, what they eat, the things they like to do, what they wear, what animals are doing etc. In spring grow a tee-pee cubby from tea tree stakes lashed together at the top and flowering creepers planted at the base of each stake e.g. Clematis, Hardenbergia, Kennedia. In autumn if the centre has an excess of leaves ensure that they become part of daily autumn play to rake, cart, jump over, mix into a leaf soup and compost. Also, autumn is the time to plant bulbs in pots or in the garden in clumps or creative patterns.
Here is the Beehive (Author Unknown)
Here is the beehive,
Where are the bees?
Hiding away where nobody sees,
Here they come creeping out of their hive,
1,2,3,4,5.

Two Little Apples (Author Unknown)
Two little apples hanging on a tree,
Two little apples smiling at me,
I shook that tree as hard as I could,
Down came the apples,
Ummmm they were good.
(Replace apples with other fruits or vegetables)

Some Trees are Tall (Author Unknown)
Some trees are tall and point to the sky,
Some droop down low and so do I,
The palm tree spreads its branches wide,
And gently sways from side to side.

Trees (Harry Behn)
Trees are the kindest things I know,
They do no harm, they simply grow.

Like A Leaf or Feather (Mary De Crespigny)
Like a leaf or feather in the windy, windy weather,
We whirl about and twirl about and all fall down together.

Slimy Worms (Susie Davies)
Worms, worms, slimy worms,
Worms that twist and wriggle,
A 100 worms in my hand,
Ooh! They make me giggle.

Today I saw a little worm (Spike Milligan)
Today I saw a little worm,
Wriggling on his belly,
Perhaps he’d like to come inside,
And see what’s on the telly.

A Little Seed (Mabel Watts)
A little seed for me to sow,
A little earth to make it grow,
A little hole, a little pat,
A little wish and that is that,
A little sun, a little shower,
A little while and then a flower.
Caterpillar (Deanna Hoermann)
Caterpillar crawling round,
Trying not to make a sound.
Comes a magpie from the sky;
Caterpillar bye bye!

The Caterpillar (Liza Pezzimenti)
When I went walking just with me,
I had to stop quite suddenly-
For there I saw, upon a wall,
A caterpillar, very small.
I picked her up and asked her name,
And on my hand she played a game.
I had to laugh at what she did,
Because she tickled as she slid.

The Ant Battalion (Denise Totterdell)
Listen carefully and you will hear
The thump, thump, thump of tiny feet.
It’s the ant battalion they must be near:
Can’t you hear their rhythmic beat?
They’re laden up with many a crumb,
Quietly they work, not making a sound.
Then off they set, a rump-a-pum-pum:
Marching away homeward bound.

Here Comes a Blue Bird (Author Unknown)
Here comes a blue bird, in through my window,
Hey, diddle diddle dum dum day.
Take a little partner, if you can find one;
Hey, diddle diddle dum dum day.
Replace blue bird with other birds e.g. lorikeet, magpie, honeyeater.

Round and Round the Garden (Author Unknown)
Round and round the garden,
Goes the teddy bear.
One step, two steps,
And he’s almost there.

The Compost Bin (Author Unknown)
Here is the compost,
Here is the lid,
I wonder whatever inside is hid?
Why it’s a slug,
Without any doubt,
Open the lid and let it slide out.
The Knobbly Tree (Shirley Hughes)
The Knobbly Tree
Is wider than me
With a secret place to be,
A hollow you can creep inside,
A sort of room where you can hide.
And no one can see
Alfie and me
When we're snug as two bugs
In the knobbly tree.

Spring Is (Anon)
Spring is showery, flowery, bowery;
Summer: hoppy, croppy, poppy;
Autumn: wheezy, sneezy, freezy;
Winter: slippy, drippy, nippy.

I'm a Little Dinosaur (Author Unknown)
I'm a little dinosaur,
In a swamp,
Munching on cycads,
Chomp, chomp, chomp,
When I hatch my eggs out,
Then you'll see,
Baby dinos 1, 2, 3.
(To the tune of I'm a Little Teapot)

What Do You Suppose? (Author Unknown)
What do you suppose?
A bee sat on my nose,
Then what do you think?
He gave me a wink,
And said, 'I beg your pardon, I thought you were the garden'.
Resources

http://childrensbooksdaily.com/100-of-the-best-books-for-children-on-sustainability/


http://www.yarnstrongsista.com/
An indigenous education consultancy and Aboriginal education resource center for the cultural appreciation of indigenous Australians.

Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC) is a non-profit organization that provides support, resources and professional development in relation to Education for sustainability in the early years.

http://www.claire-warden.com/
Claire Warden is the founder of Scotland’s first Nature Kindergarten. She leads on the debate of Outdoor Play and Outdoor Learning.

CERES is an award winning, not-for-profit, sustainability centre and urban farm located on 4.5 hectares on the Merri Creek in East Brunswick, Melbourne.

Sustainable Gardening Australia


Acknowledgements

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Produced by the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria / Learning Team, 2018