

Kids go Gardening

When it's too wet to play outside, there's no reason to be bored. Especially if you like messing about with plants!

Actually, some plants also prefer to be cosy indoors away from the frost and rain!

Look out for baby houseplants and succulents at the garden centre. For about

the price of an ice cream you can buy a plant that could last you for years!

Try a terrarium (see page 17) or make your own plant containers, such as this 'sundae' pot, out of recycled junk.

Succulent Sundae

You will need:

- A large plastic fizzy drink bottle
- An old CD
- Sticky tape
- Old magazines or newspapers
- Craft glue
- Varnish or paint (optional)
- A small succulent plant (we used Echeveria)
- Potting mix for succulents
- Pebbles



To make the container:

1. Cut the top third off the plastic bottle with scissors. You may need an adult to help.
2. Use plenty of sticky tape to join the neck of the bottle to the centre of the CD.
3. Cut or rip out small colourful pictures and glue them to cover the whole surface (this is called découpage). Alternatively, use little bits of newspaper (paper-mâché).
4. Once the glue is dry, add another layer of craft glue to protect the paper, or coat with shiny varnish or paint.

Planting:

1. Fill the stem and bottom of your pot with pebbles for drainage.
2. Add enough potting mix so that your plant sits about 2cm below the rim of the pot.
3. Remove your succulent from its nursery pot and place it in the middle of your 'sundae' pot. Fill around the edges with potting mix, gently pressing it down with your fingers.
4. Decorate the top of the potting mix with pebbles.

Caring for succulents:

- Succulents like plenty of light. Place them in a bright sunny spot.
- They don't drink much water. Just remember they come from the desert! The potting mix should always feel dry before watering.
- Use coarse potting mix with lots of sand and pumice, so the roots get plenty of air and water can drain through quickly.
- Succulents live outdoors too. Most will put up with a bit of frost. What they hate is being cold and wet at the same time, which is a good reason to grow them in pots!



decorate with pebbles



Miniature landscapes

If it's too wet to dig outside, how about making a miniature garden indoors. All you need is a container, potting mix, a few mini plants (or cuttings from the garden) - and your imagination. You might like to make your own mini desert, a fairy forest, a Jurassic jungle, or a tiny tropical rainforest in a terrarium ...

Use your plastic dinosaurs or animals to make it look real!



Terrariums

A terrarium is a glass container with plants growing in it. Tropical plants are great for terrariums because they love humidity (damp misty air around their leaves).

Once plants start growing, the terrarium becomes a mini climate of its own. The leaves release moisture, which condenses on the glass and trickles back down into the soil, just like rain! If the terrarium has a lid, it can go weeks without watering.

baby asparagus fern

mini desert

Meet the

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Yates Garden Greenies



Make your own terrarium

You will need:

- ✓ A glass container
- ✓ Small pebbles
- ✓ Sphagnum moss
- ✓ Potting mix
- ✓ Baby houseplants (enough to easily fit your container)
- ✓ Decorations (optional)



1 Start with a layer of pebbles for drainage, at least 3cm deep (deeper for a larger container).

This drainage layer is very important as the plant roots will rot if the soil gets too wet.



2 Lay a thin bed of sphagnum moss (or use weedmat) over the pebbles to prevent the potting mix falling down into the pebbles.



3 Add potting mix, deep enough for your plant roots. Ideally the container should be no more than half full.



begonia



peperomia

4. Try out your plants until you are happy with your arrangement, then take each plant out of its pot, make a hole and carefully plant it. A dessertspoon or chopstick may be helpful. Allow enough space for plants to grow and spread.

Taking care of your Terrarium

1. Never place your terrarium in full sun.
2. Make sure the inside of the terrarium is clean and use fresh sterile soil and pebbles. Make sure your baby plants are not diseased. Disease can spread quickly in a terrarium.
3. Water occasionally using a mist spray bottle or small watering can. But remember, in winter plants only need a tiny amount of watering. If there is condensation on the glass, don't water. If in doubt, water less, but watch carefully - you won't want your plants to dry out and wilt!
4. There should be enough food in the potting mix, but if the leaves start to look yellow, feed with weak houseplant food (1/4 strength).
5. If the terrarium gets crowded you may need to prune or take out a plant. Quickly remove any plant that looks very sick or dies!

Tip: Once a plant gets too big for the terrarium it can be removed and replanted into a bigger pot with fresh potting mix.

We used a fishbowl shaped vase. You could also use a large jar, an old fishbowl or an old aquarium for a really big terrarium!

- Choose plants that look good together, with contrasting colours and textures. Also, it's important to choose plants that like the same kind of conditions.
- Be creative! Use your own special beads, marbles, stones or pieces of wood as accents. If there is room you could make a hilly landscape with different levels of soil.



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www.yates.co.nz/kids-gardening

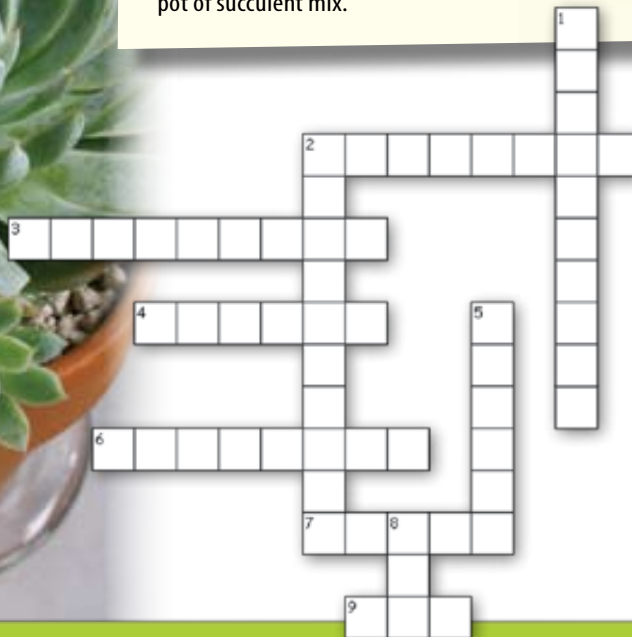


QUIRKY CREATURE - Hen & Chicks



Have you ever watched a mother hen with her new chickens?

The tiny babies stay very close to their mother, sheltering under her feathers. Echeveria elegans is called 'Hen and Chicks' because the baby plants grow closely around the edges of the 'mother' plant. The chicks form their own little roots and can be broken off and planted in their own little pot of succulent mix.



ACROSS

2. Tropical plants love this
3. A glass container for plants to grow in
4. Plants need less water in this season
6. Why we put pebbles in the bottom of a terrarium
7. Baby's _____ is a plant with tiny leaves
9. Succulents love ____ soil

DOWN

1. Plant food
2. A plant that grows indoors
5. Hen and _____ is another name for Echeveria
8. In wet soil roots don't get enough _____

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Be in to Win

Yates Young Gardener Get your hands dirty

by Janice Marriott

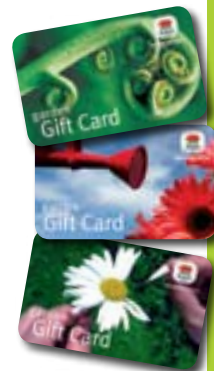
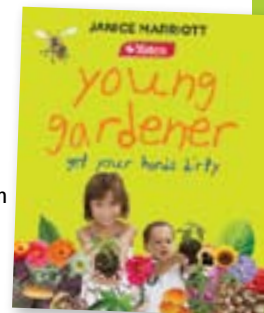
This new book is full of exciting things to make in the garden. Find out how to grow a humungous fungus, make shrunken heads, create gungy pinecones, glop pots and plenty more! Plus fun facts, puzzles and jokes!! The award winning author, Janice Marriott says, "This is the book I wish I'd had years ago". Janice wrote about her own garden in her bestselling book, 'Common Ground'.

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To enter, write the name of the book, followed by name, address and telephone number on the back of a stamped envelope, and send to: NGIA, Box 3443, Wellington by 29 July 2011, OR SAVE A STAMP by dropping your entry into a Go Gardening Entry Box at your nearest Gardening New Zealand retailer by 29 July 2011.

And don't forget ...

you can also be into win \$1000 worth of NGIA garden gift cards – turn to page 29 to find out more!



ANSWERS: Across: 2. humidity, 3. terrarium, 4. winter, 6. drainage, 7. tears, 9. dry
Down: 1. fertiliser, 2. houseplant, 5. chicks, 8. air