4-H Horticulture Project

WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT?
Horticulture involves the science and art of cultivating flowers, fruits, vegetables or ornamental plants in a garden, orchard or nursery. The 4-H horticulture project helps you discover the magic of plants, whether for food, engineering or pure enjoyment.

» Explore the basics of plants and plant science including plant growth, soils and plant varieties.
» Learn to care for vegetable and flower gardens, lawns or commercial horticulture crops.
» Learn about crop and soil sciences whether you grow plants in a container, on a small garden plot, or on an acre of land or more.
» Learn about careers in the “green” industry.

THE BIG PICTURE

Starting Out:
» Identify different types of gardens.
» Plant seeds.
» Grow and maintain a garden.
» Learn pest management techniques.
» Learn how to harvest crops.
» Examine the parts of a plant and discover the function of each part.
» Learn to identify and use common garden tools.

Learning More:
» Learn about garden fertilizer and nutrients plants need to grow.
» Plant bulbs in the fall for spring blooms.
» Learn to divide plants.
» Make a container garden.
» Learn about compost and build a compost bin.
» Discover different ways to prepare and use garden produce.
» Sell produce at a farmers market.

Expanding Horizons:
» Start an herb garden.
» Learn about food preservation methods.
» Take a soil sample and have it tested for nutrients.
» Learn about integrated pest management for the yard or garden.
» Experiment with organic production.
» Design an experiment.
» Test different varieties or management techniques.
» Design a landscape plan for your home.

CURRICULA & RESOURCES

Michigan 4-H Curricula
» 4-H Flower Gardening Project Guide (4H1337): http://4h.msue.msu.edu/4h/resources/flower_garden_gd
» Michigan 4-H Guide to Herb Gardening Projects (4H1516): http://4h.msue.msu.edu/4h/resources/mich_4h_gd_herb_gardening
» Heritage Gardening: Vegetables (4H1279): http://4h.msue.msu.edu/4h/resources/heritage_gardening_vegetables
» Michigan 4-H Guide to Herb Gardening Projects (4H1516): http://4h.msue.msu.edu/4h/resources/mich_4h_gd_herb_gardening
» Selecting Vegetables for Exhibit (4H1175): http://4h.msue.msu.edu/4h/resources/selecting_vegs

National 4-H Curricula
http://www.4-h.org/resource-library/curriculum/
Gardening:
» See Them Sprout (07162) (Grades 3-4)
» Let's Get Growing (07163) (Grades 5-6)
» Take Your Pick (07164) (Grades 7-9)
» Growing Profits (07165) (Grades 10-12)
» Helper's Guide (07166)
» Exhibit Guide (07167)
FOCUS ON HORTICULTURE

Science
» Explore the parts of plants and study their functions.
» Design experiments to discover optimal temperature and light on seed germination and plant growth.
» Experiment using different types of weed prevention in your yard or garden, comparing organic and inorganic methods.
» Experiment using different types of pest control in your yard or garden, comparing organic and inorganic methods.

Citizenship & Leadership
» Volunteer at a community garden or start your own.
» Organize a perennial exchange.
» Start or participate in a local garden tour.
» Grow a row for the hungry or donate excess produce to the local food bank.
» Cut some flowers or design a floral arrangement and bring to a nursing home.

Communication
Prepare a poster or demonstration on how to:
» Grow a square-foot, keyhole or other specialty garden.
» Design a container garden.
» Use herbs.
» Make a floral arrangement.
» Preserve fruits and vegetables.
» Obtain proper nutrition from the fruits and vegetables you grow.
» Prune woody ornamentals.

Life Skills
» Use critical-thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills to help you make good decisions about project management.
» Keep records on your project expenses and income.
» Practice personal resiliency through successes and challenges in your project.

Curricula & Resources, Cont.

Curricula — Other States
» Garden Mosaics (Cornell University): http://communitygardennews.org/gardenmosaics/pgs/action/action_do.htm
» My First Garden (University of Illinois Extension): http://urbanext.illinois.edu/firstgarden/index.cfm

Other Resources
» KidsGardening (National Gardening Association): http://www.kidsgardening.org/

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?
» Contact your local Michigan State University (MSU) Extension office for workshops, activities and events.
» If you are interested in a college education in horticulture or crop science, visit MSU’s website at www.msue.edu to explore those majors.
» Enter a local horticulture contest.
» Attend a garden show.
» Job shadow a horticulturist, flower shop owner or greenhouse manager.
» Enter a horticulture exhibit at the county fair.
» Tour the MSU Horticulture Gardens including the Michigan 4-H Children’s Garden.


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