

*Our gardener friends at Longue Vue House and Gardens in New Orleans, have provided instructions for starting your indoor classroom victory garden.*

## **INDOOR GARDENS**

Planting an indoor garden at home or in the classroom helps children cultivate respect for their environment, while learning responsibility by caring for living things, and growing to love getting their hands dirty! From a curriculum standpoint, a classroom garden provides the opportunity to explore educational concepts across a range of subject areas, including: science, math, geography, and art.

### **What to Plant?**

Herbs are especially easy to grow indoors and many have fragrant oils that will provide a pleasant scent to the home or classroom. Basil, rosemary, mint, and thyme are great choices for the classroom garden.

Another local favorite is red beans! Try this activity to sprout a red kidney bean plant from seed. You will need kidney beans, paper towels, and sandwich-sized plastic bags.

1. Place bean inside a wet paper towel in a baggie and seal the top.
2. Tape the baggie to a sunny window in classroom.
3. Check the bean for root growth in 7 to 10 days.

### **What Types of Containers?**

Whether planting a kidney bean or an herb, the plants will need soil to grow and adequate drainage. Select a small pot with drainage holes along the bottom, so that the roots do not stay overly wet, causing them to rot or die. Other classroom container ideas include re-using yogurt containers, egg cartons, and plastic cups—just remember to punch holes in the bottom of whatever recycled container you choose. Place plants near windows because they need sunlight, and, be sure to water them when the soil gets dry.

### **Get Growing!**

Encourage young gardeners to document the growth of their plants through measurements, sketches, or photographs. Students should pay special attention to comparing the root, stem, leaf, and flower systems of different plants.

### **Enjoying the Bounty!**

Herbs and veggies grown in the classroom can be enjoyed straight from the plant or prepared in easy recipes. Try this recipe for a kid-friendly, yummy snack.

Easy-Cheesy Pesto Recipe

2 cups fresh basil leaves, washed and dried

1/2 cup parmesan reggiano cheese, grated

1/2 cup olive oil

1/3 cup raw pine nuts, almonds, or walnuts

Salt and pepper to taste

Mix basil and nuts in a food processor until smooth. Add the olive oil, then the grated cheese, just until blended. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Serve with pasta or potatoes! YUMMY!