



**FROM KITCHEN  
TO GARDEN**



## CONNECTING JUNIOR GARDENERS PROGRAM

The Connecting Junior Gardeners Program is a four-part educational gardening resource developed by the Victorian Schools Garden Program (VSGP) for primary aged school children. The Program consists of a suite of videos, fact sheets and activities, developed to inspire and excite children to discover the joys and benefits of gardening together. As well as learning some of the foundations of gardening, children will be able to enjoy physical exercise, a connection with nature, being mindful and sharing the whole experience with their peers.

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This resource was created by Grassroots Sustainability. The Program is managed by Nursery and Garden Industry Victoria.



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# Teacher Resource

## INTRODUCTION

This activity allows students to explore and learn how they can start a garden on the cheap... from things in the home kitchen! Very few people realise this, but we can start growing plants from food waste. Old potatoes, spring onion scraps, pumpkin seeds, celery offcuts, coriander seeds, sprouted sweet potatoes - from old food, we can grow new food!

## Year 2 - Year 6 Activity

### BENEFITS

- Uses a waste product to grow food
- Uses kitchen scraps as a resource, reducing waste to landfill
- Reduces unnecessary food packaging
- Cheap way of starting a garden
- Saves money on groceries
- Can be done in small garden beds, pots or even on your windowsill for people who have minimal space
- Is a whole lot of fun!

### MATERIALS

*Required materials will depend on what foods/scraps are experimented with.*

- Potting mix
- Pots
- A selection of food scraps
- Some saucers/bowls/cups/jars
- Paper towel
- Reused plastic bag



### THERE ARE THREE PARTS TO THIS ACTIVITY:

1. Individual research - students are to gain some background information on their chosen plant
2. Renegade food growing - small group work (2-3 students). Each group chooses a plant/scrap to work with.
3. Observation - Students are to observe their plants over the following few weeks

# STUDENT RESOURCE

## PLANT RESEARCH

- Which plant have you chosen to grow from scrap?
- How would you usually grow it (from seed, from crown, from cutting)?
- What season is your plant best planted?
- What growing conditions does your plant like?
- How long does your plant take to mature?
- In which season does it fruit?
- Other interesting facts...

## RENEGADE FOOD GROWING

### SPRING ONIONS

Generally, we buy spring onions in a bunch, wrapped in plastic or tied with rubber bands. However it may be, they're always sold with a root end that we trim off before using the rest in our cooking. That is, until now... because we can actually use these root ends to regrow new spring onions! Here's how to upcycle this common food scrap:

1. Slice off the ends of the bulbs as you normally would, leaving the roots attached.
2. Stand the off-cut root-end down in a small jar or cup.
3. Pour in a small amount of water so the roots are covered, but be sure to leave the top above the water line.
4. Place on a windowsill and check daily to make sure the roots are kept under water. It's a great idea to change the water every couple of days. Make sure the spot you've chosen gets good natural light for a few hours a day.
5. After a few days, green shoots will emerge from the tops of the bulbs. Once they've emerged, they'll continue to grow very quickly!
6. Once the shoots reach around 5cms long, you can plant them into the garden or into a pot. Make sure you use a good quality potting mix. Keep the soil moist, but not wet.
7. Within a few weeks, you'll be ready to harvest! Simply cut off what you need at the ground. They will inevitably continue to re-shoot and you'll have continuous spring onions - happy days!

It's highly likely your spring onions will grow much bigger than the ones you see in the supermarket. It's also likely they will taste so much better! And if they flower, their blossoms are an amazing addition to salads. Enjoy!





## CELERY

Celery can be quite an expensive vegetable to buy from the shops. Now that you're onto this, you'll hopefully never have to buy celery again. Growing celery from the offcut base is really quite simple!

1. Slice off the bottom end of the celery as you normally would, leaving around 5cms of the end.
2. Sit the celery offcut in a shallow glass bowl, saucer or jar, root-end down.
3. Pour in a small amount of water so the root end is covered, but be sure to leave the top half *above* the water line. Around 2.5cms in the water and 2.5cms out of the water is ideal.
4. Place on a windowsill and check daily to ensure the bottom half is kept under water. It's a great idea to change the water every couple of days. Make sure the spot you've chosen gets good natural light for a few hours a day.
5. After a few days, you should start seeing small green leaves emerge from the centre of the offcut. Once they've emerged, they'll continue to grow very quickly!
6. After a few more days, you will likely see some roots emerge from the bottom.
7. Once the new shoots reach around 3-5cms long and you have some roots appearing, you can plant it into the garden or a pot. Make sure you use a good quality potting mix.
8. Make a hole deep and wide enough to hold the plant from the root end up to the cut end - around 5cms. Sit the celery into the soil, and gently fill in and tamp the surrounding soil down. Ensure the cut end and all of the emerging leaves and stalks are above the soil.
9. Continue to watch as your celery grows. Keep the soil moist but not wet.
10. After around 8-10 weeks, your celery will be mature and you can harvest as you need. Simply cut or snap off what you need at the ground and yes, your celery will continue to grow!

Celery thrives in cool weather and loves rich soil, so give it shade in the hottest part of the day and fertilise to top up nutrients. With some love, it will continue to grow for a long time!



## BEETROOT

Beetroot is amazing. The fresh type that is... not the canned variety! In fact, if it's the canned variety you're used to, you'll have to hunt down and try the fresh stuff, as this won't work with canned beetroot!

1. Buy a bunch of fresh beetroot with the tops still attached.
2. Cut the stems off, leaving about 1cm of stalk attached to the beet. Make sure you use them for cooking - both the leaves and stalks are delicious sautéed with olive oil, garlic and salt... hmmm, where were we?!
3. Cut off the top of the beets, ensuring you leave around 2cms of the top of the beet. So this means you will have one centimetre of stalk attached to two centimetres of beet. You can eat the rest of the beetroot now!
4. Sit the offcut in a shallow glass bowl, saucer or jar with the stalk side facing up. Pour in a small amount of water so the flat end is covered but be sure to leave the top half above the water line.
5. Place on a windowsill and check daily to make sure the bottom half is kept under water. It's a great idea to change the water every couple of days. Make sure the spot you've chosen gets good natural light for a few hours a day.
6. After a few days, you should start seeing small green leaves emerge from the centre of the top. Once they've emerged, they'll continue to grow very quickly!
7. The leaves can be harvested and used as you wish. Your beetroot can be planted in the garden or left in a pot just like the celery and spring onions - you can't beet it!



## AVOCADO

If every home had an avocado tree, the world would be a better place. All we need to grow our own is an avocado pip, some paper towel and an old airtight plastic bag.

1. Simply remove the pip from an avocado, being careful not to damage it.
2. Give the pip a rinse and peel off the brown skin.
3. Wrap the pip in some damp paper towel, ensuring it's damp but not soaking wet.
4. Place the paper towel-covered pip inside an airtight plastic bag (a zip-lock bag or old bread bag sealed works fine). Seal the bag to lock in the moisture and create a humid environment.
5. Leave it on a sunny windowsill and check it once a week to make sure it's still moist. When you're checking it, also gently check the pip for growth. The pip will start to crack as the roots grow out from the middle.
6. Once 3-5cms of root has emerged, you can plant it in a pot so it can draw nutrients from the soil and grow larger. Point the root downwards in the pot and ensure you don't damage it when filling with potting mix. It's best to leave the top of the pip exposed out of the soil, so you can monitor the shoot.
7. Once your avocado shoots, you can either keep it in the pot as an indoor or outdoor plant, or plant it in the garden. Avocado plants do like a sunny place in well-drained soil, and don't like frosts, so keep that in mind if you go the garden option. Soon you will have a little tree, and in a few years, some fruit!





## LETTUCE

Lettuce is so quick and easy to grow. And even better, it can save you so much money and unnecessary packaging by growing your own!

1. First, cut your bought lettuce about 2-5cms from the bottom. The lettuces with the roots attached work a lot quicker, however lettuces without roots will work too.
2. Sit the root end of the lettuce in a glass or jar, roots down. Pour in a small amount of water so the root end is covered, but be sure to leave the top half above the water line.
3. Place on a windowsill and check daily to make sure the bottom half is kept under water. It's a great idea to change the water every couple of days. Make sure the spot you've chosen gets good natural light for a few hours a day.
4. After a few days, you should start seeing small green leaves emerge from your lettuce stem. Once they've emerged, they'll continue to grow very quickly!
5. After 10-12 days the lettuce will be about as big as it's going to get in water. You can either harvest it here or plant it to let it grow bigger. To plant, follow the celery and spring onion instructions.

It's important to remember that not every lettuce will work perfectly. In fact, some may not work at all. Some might go to seed, while others may grow quickly then wither away. If it doesn't work, it's important to give it another go as when it does work, it's amazing!



## POTATO

We've all seen them... We've all owned one.... We've all been frightened by them... You're digging deep in your pantry and find that forgotten potato - the one with all the dangling bits! Well fear no longer, in fact, embrace this little wonder. You can certainly plant one of these potatoes in the ground and let it grow, but there's a better way to get more plants and more potatoes. Here's how!

1. Cut the potato into pieces, trying to leave one or two eyes on each piece of potato - the eyes are the little sprouts which turn into the new tubers. By doing this, you can plant the potato pieces apart, to prevent competition for resources in the soil. In doing so, you'll get more plants and more potatoes!
2. Once cut, leave the potato pieces out for a few days, to give them a chance to dry out. This will prevent the potato from rotting after you have planted them.
3. While your cut potato pieces are drying out, you can choose and prepare an appropriate site in your garden.
4. For happy, thriving potatoes - choose an area that gets 6 - 8 hours of full sun per day. Avoid areas with full shade. Potatoes love rich soil so if you can add compost and manure... they'll be very happy.
5. Once your pieces have dried slightly and your site is ready, plant each piece about 10 - 15cms deep and approximately 30 - 40cms apart.

Supermarket potatoes = OK.. Homegrown potatoes = amazingness!





## PUMPKIN

Pumpkins are so versatile and so delicious. One vine can grow many metres long and give you many pumpkins - who wouldn't want to grow them?!

1. Cut open a pumpkin to expose the seeds - best to get an adult to help here, especially for the really big ones! Scrape out all the membrane and seeds. Separate the seeds out of the membrane, then give the seeds a rinse under cold water and pat dry with paper towel.
2. Place seeds on a *dry* piece of paper towel and leave in a warm, dry, airy spot until they're dry to the touch. This could take anywhere from 2 -5 days.
3. Store in a covered jar until Spring - this is the time to grow pumpkins.
4. When ready to plant, choose a spot that gets 6 - 8 hours of full sun per day. Avoid areas with full shade. Pumpkins love rich soil so if you can add compost and manure, they'll be very happy! Also mound up the earth to ensure good drainage.
5. In your chosen spot, mound up the soil a little and plant 3 - 5 seeds in your mound, approximately 5cms deep. Water in well, then wait a few days to see them sprout.
6. Once your pumpkin seeds have germinated, keep the two healthiest plants and remove the others - this helps you get the best, strongest plants. Keep them well watered until they're really big, especially on hot days.

Pumpkin plants sprawl as a vine, so make sure you have a large area for them to grow in. Or, alternatively, an area for them to climb up! They may need assistance first, but once they start climbing, you'll have trouble stopping them!



## OBSERVATION

My name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Planted: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

What I planted: \_\_\_\_\_

Week	What you did	Observations
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

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My name: \_\_\_\_\_

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