

## Oconto County 4-H

As you work on your project throughout the year, you may find it helpful to take pictures and keep notes. They can come in handy as you plan for ways to share what you have learned and look back on what you've done.

Suggestions for showcasing your project work:

- Tell about what you've learned at **Speaking Fest**
- Show what you've learned at **Demonstration Fest**
- Take your project to the **Oconto County Fair**
- Enter local contests **outside of 4-H** like essay contests, shows and speech contests
- Look for creative ways to share what you've learned with your **club**, your **school** and your **community**

### *Stay in Touch!*

*Here's how you can contact your key leader(s) this year:*

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*Adult Key Leader*

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*Developed by Oconto County 4-H Project Development Committee*

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# WELCOME TO THE OCONTO COUNTY 4-H

## Gardening

### PROJECT!



*Vegetable gardening is a hobby enjoyed by people of all ages. There is something very satisfying about growing your own food.*

*The introductory 4-H project literature for gardening is called "**See Them Sprout**". You'll get the basics to help you prepare for planting your own garden.*

*Enjoy your time **indoors** planning your garden, and **outdoors** working in it.*



*Have fun!*

### Beginning of the Year

Here is what I would like to learn this year (my goal) in the Gardening project:

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### During the Project Year

Here are the steps I will take to meet my goal:

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### During the Project Year

Here's what I learned, and how I felt about my project experience:

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### Did you enjoy GARDEN?

Was this project fun for you? If not, **that's okay**. It isn't likely that you'll like every project. What's important is that you **tried something new** and that you **learned something**.

What did you learn in this project? What could you have done better? What are you really proud of? These are all good questions to think about when you finish a project.

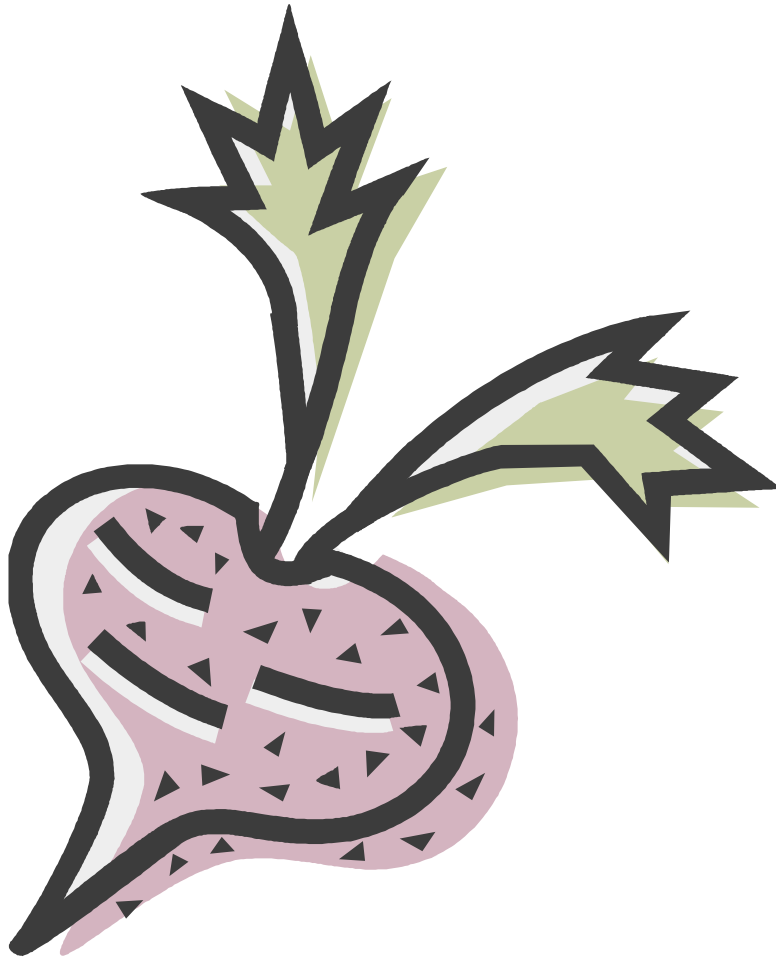
### Thanks for trying out the GARDEN PROJECT!

*If you liked this project, you should consider signing up for another year! You will get to dig deeper into the project and discover many new and exciting things.*

*It's never too soon to get started on next year's projects!*



**See you in the next project year!**



## November

The soil in your garden is the **FOUNDATION** for a great garden!

Did you know that there are different **TYPES** of **SOIL**? It all has to do with **TEXTURE** of the **MINERALS** in your soil. There are three kinds of soil minerals: **SAND**, **SILT**, and **CLAY**.

This month we are going to find out what kind of soil you have in your garden.



### You'll need:

- Sharpie
- Quart jar
- Handful or two of garden soil
- Water
- Tsp of salt
- Ruler

Get a couple handfuls of soil from your garden — make sure it is dry and doesn't have lumps. Place it into a quart jar. Put some water in the jar. Add a teaspoon or so of salt and shake it gently. Now add water until the jar is full except for about an inch at the top. Put the lid on tightly, and **SHAKE** it.

Now put the jar in a place where it won't be disturbed but you can get to it. You'll see **SAND** starting to settle to the bottom almost immediately. The sand will be done settling in a minute or two and you can mark the **TOP** of the sand line with your sharpie.

The **SILT** settles next, but it takes a few hours. After three or four hours, if you think the silt is all settled, mark the top of that layer.

The **CLAY** takes a long time to settle — **DAYS**, in fact. You can mark that after a week or so. Then look closely at the three layers and compare.

**Which do you have more of in your soil — sand, silt, or clay?**



And just in case you **REALLY** want to know more.....

Sandy soil is very light and dry. Even when water hits it, it drains away quickly.

Silty soils hold moisture and nutrients much better than sandy soils.

Clay soil is very heavy and it hold moisture. It holds moisture so well that it can be hard to dig in clay soil that has dried!

Most soils are a **mixture** of all three textures of soil minerals. The very best soil for gardening is a combination of all three soil minerals in this ratio: Sandy 40 %, Silt 40%, and Clay 20%. If a soil has too much sand, it may have problems with soil fertility and moisture. If you have a soil that is mostly sandy, or mostly clay, you may want to consider adding **ORGANIC** material to it. Organic material includes peat moss, compost, cow manure, or green manure.

### If you like a challenge, TRY THIS!

*Find out the percentages of each soil texture in your garden. Take your ruler and measure how much total soil is in the jar. Now measure each of the layers.*

*Let's say that you have a total of four inches in the jar, and one inch of sandy soil. You would divide one by four and get 25%. So your soil is 25% SAND.*

*Now let's say you have 2 inches of silt. Divide 2 (inches of silt) by 4 (total inches of soil) and you get 50 – 50 percent SILT.*

*And you have 1 inch of clay. So divide 1 (inch of clay) by 4 (inches of soil) and you get 25– 25 percent CLAY.*

*Check on the internet for the SOIL TRIANGLE, and it will tell you exactly what kind of soil you have.*

**HINT:** Did you know that UWEX does soil testing? For a small fee, you can send a sample of your garden soil to the state labs. They will tell you about your **SOIL FERTILITY**, and give you suggestions for fertilizers to get your garden ready for planting. Call UWEX to find out how to send in YOUR soil for testing!

## August

Decisions, decisions, decisions! If you're heading to the fair, choose vegetables that are **UNIFORM** without **BLEMISHES**. For example, a green pepper needs to have all four "corners" on the bottom, and the corners need to be the same size.



As you plan for your fair exhibits, read the fair premium list **CAREFULLY**. It will tell you just what to bring. If it says to trim the stems of your green beans to 1/4 inch - that's what you should do! **NOTE:** the number in parentheses is the number of the vegetable that you should bring for each exhibit. The Oconto County Fair Premium List is available at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/oconto/4h/OcontoCountyFairpage.html>

**Exhibiting and Judging VEGETABLES** is the **SECOND** most helpful resource as you prepare for the fair! It is available for **FREE** download from The Learning Store at University of Wisconsin Extension Publications at <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/index.aspx>

Are you wondering what is your **MOST** helpful resource? It's your **KEY PROJECT LEADER** - whose name is on the back of this booklet. Feel free to give your project leader a call - she loves to answer vegetable questions!

**HINT:** If you are taking onions to the fair, you need to pull them **TWO WEEKS BEFORE** the fair, and hang them to dry!

## June

My crystal ball tells me what you will be doing this summer.....**THINNING, WATERING, and WEEDING!** Let me know if I was right....



Need suggestions on how to thin, water, weed, and plant? Check out *Growing Vegetables at Home*. It has great information for you AND it is available for **FREE** download from The Learning Store at University of Wisconsin Extension Publications at <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/index.aspx>

## July

One of the great things about 4-H is meeting other people with the same interests as you have! And there is no better place to meet those gardening 4-H'ers than at the summer Vegetable Garden **Project Meeting**.

Your key leaders will hold a gardening project meeting sometime in July. You'll get lots of hints about getting your vegetables ready for the fair.

**HINT:** Watch for the project meeting date in the 4-H newsletter. You might get an e-mail about it also, if you have given the 4-H office your e-mail address.



## December

Nothing much is growing **OUTSIDE**, but let's see what's sprouting **INSIDE** in your own **SANDWICH BAG Garden**.



Here's what you'll need:

- Plastic sealable sandwich bag
- Bean or pea seeds (dry)
- Water
- Paper napkin

**Step ONE.** Soak your seed overnight in a cup of water.

**Step TWO.** Put the paper napkin inside of the sandwich bag (it should be flat).

**Step THREE.** Sprinkle a little water on the napkin. It should be **MOIST** but not dripping wet!

**Step FOUR.** Place the bean or pea seed **ON** the paper towel. Seal the bag tightly.

Now all you have to do is find a nice warm place (**NOT IN THE SUN**) for your seed to sprout. The top of the refrigerator is often just right, especially if you place the packet on top of a towel. Check it daily to see if you need to add a few drops of water.

Over the next few days, you will see changes in your seeds. You might want to record these changes. You could draw what you see. You could also use a ruler to measure the **root** as it comes out, and the **stem**.

**HINT:** Good seeds grow **GREAT** plants. Order your **seed catalog** this month to make sure that you get it in plenty of time to plan your garden. We have a seed company right here in Wisconsin: **Jung Seed Company**, 335 S. High Street, Randolph, WI 53956. Their telephone number is 800-297-3123. **NOTE:** There is a charge to mail a catalog to you (\$3.00) but you get a coupon for \$3.00 off on your purchases.

## January

Let's plant an indoor garden! **AN HERB GARDEN!**



**Choose your herbs!** Pick one or two herbs that you LOVE...like **BASIL** for your spaghetti sauce or **ROSEMARY** for your baked chicken.

**Find a spot!** You'll need a **sunny window** for your garden — garden plants need lots of sun to grow. If the plants aren't getting at least 5 hours of sunlight, you might want to consider getting a grow light.

**Buy seeds or plants!** Buy seeds that are fresh (check the date on the package)! If you buy plants, look for ones that are healthy-looking with straight stems.

**Choose a container.** Be creative! There are lots of pots to buy at garden centers and discount stores, but containers are fun to make also. Paint an old clay pot or see what you can find lying around! I use an old rusted teapot for one of my plants.

**Care for your garden.** Your indoor herb garden will need some special care. It is depends on you for EVERYTHING. If you used potting soil, you will probably have enough nutrients in the soil to last for several months. But YOU are the only source of water for these plants. Stick your finger in the soil as far as you can every week and pull it out. Was the soil wet? Was it dry? If it's dry, water the plant. If not, wait a few days.

**Harvest!** "Trim" branches from your herbs, and take little snippets for your cooking! Mmmmmm...GOOD!



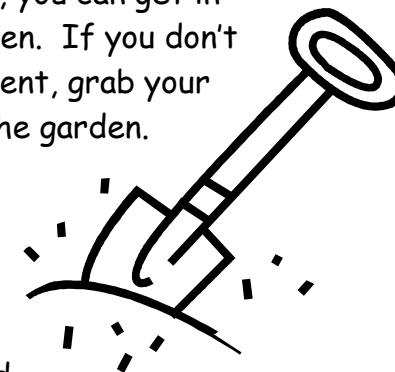
## May

As soon as the soil is no longer wet, you can get in there and start preparing the garden. If you don't prepare your soil with large equipment, grab your spade and a rake and head out to the garden.

Turn the soil with the spade, breaking up large clumps.

According to *THE VEGETABLE GARDEN*,

the soil should be worked to a depth of about 6 - 8 inches. When the garden is spaded and large clumps are broken up, begin raking it to a nice smooth finish.



Some of your early seeds like spinach and peas can be planted in May. Remember to read the package directions carefully. Different types of seeds need different things. Some seeds need to be very near the surface - others need to be planted more deeply.

**Hint:** If you seed in dry soil, you will need to add **WATER**.

**Note:** *The Vegetable Garden* is available for **FREE** download from The Learning Store at University of Wisconsin Extension Publications at <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/index.aspx>)

## April

Humans aren't the only ones who like to eat vegetables. It's time to think ahead to how you will protect your garden this summer.

For many years now, gardeners have dealt with pesky (and HUNGRY) critters by putting out scarecrows. You can make a **scarecrow** OR you might want to try your hand at making a **wind chime**. Anything that moves or makes noise will work to scare away unwanted dinner guests, at least for awhile.

Here's an idea for a **wind chime**: Gather old forks and spoons (the bigger the better) and string them together. One way to do it is to drill holes in the handles (you'll need an adult for that job!), and secure them with string to a stick. Hang the stick the long way from two posts or branches near the garden. Put the forks and spoons near enough to each other that they clang together in the wind. What else could you use to make a wind chime? Think **NOISY!**

Here's another idea: Take small bells and tie them to a string. Again, put them close enough together so that they jingle together.

What ideas do **YOU** have about making a wind chime?

**HINT:** After a while, the animals might not seem like they are afraid of your scarecrow or chimes anymore. Then you'll know that they have gotten used to it. You'll need to change things a bit so it seems new to them.



## February



If you ordered a seed catalog, you can start checking your mail box. Any day now, the seed catalog will come, if it hasn't already. And that can mean only one thing - it's time to start planning your garden!

What will you plant? Think about what you like to eat. And don't forget the rest of your family - what do they like to eat? It doesn't make much sense to plant broccoli if no one in your family eats it!

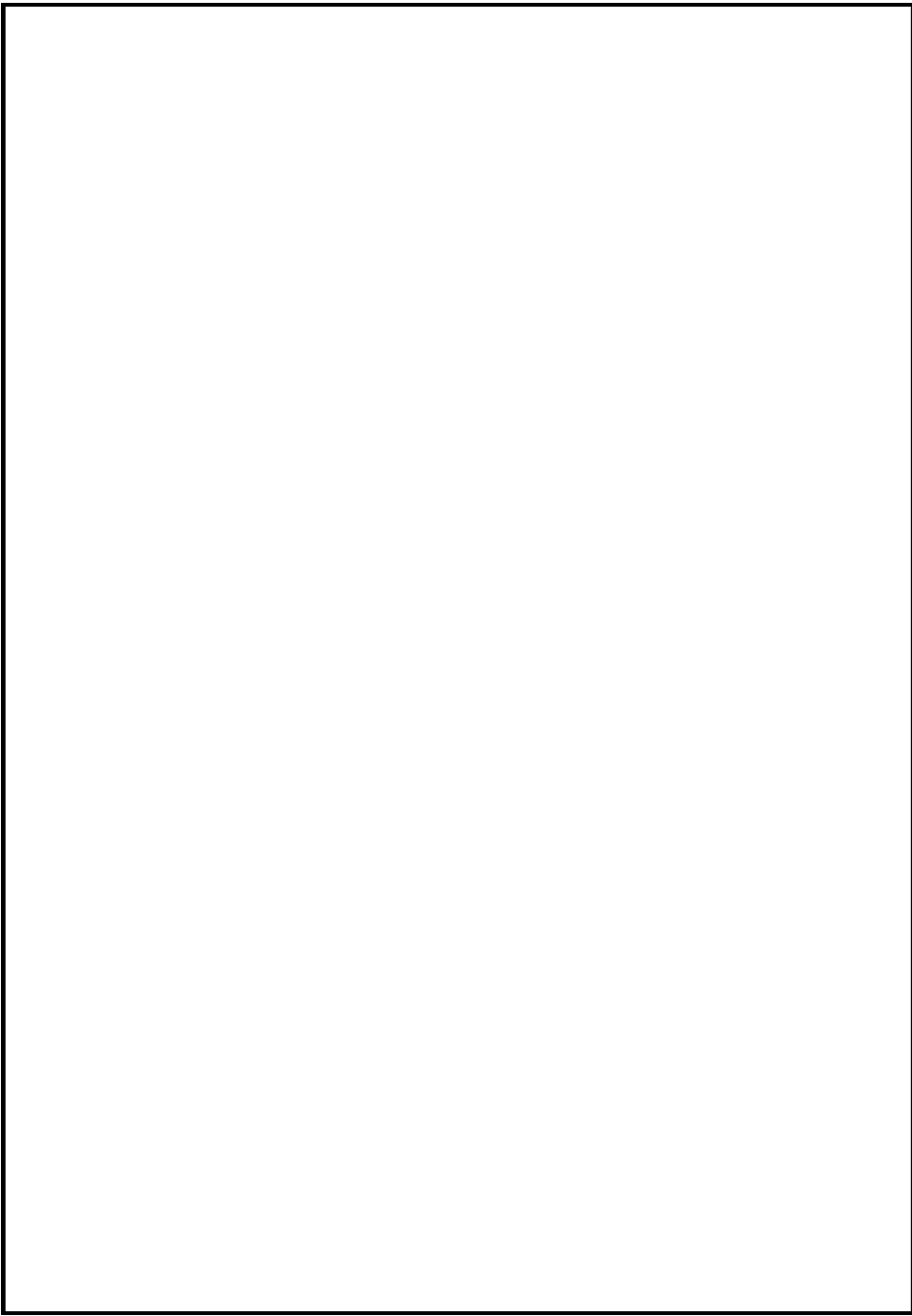
And when you are choosing the vegetables to plant, compare sizes, shapes, and varieties of produce. Did you know that there are different shapes of carrots? They come in **SHORT** and **LONG varieties**. And pay attention to the variety that you choose. If you exhibit at the fair, the judge will probably ask you to tell him about the variety of your entry.



Think ahead! How many plantings will each crop have? When will each planting occur?

Think small! Try to grow your plants in the smallest space you can. Why? **LESS WORK WEEDING!**

**HINT:** Put your garden plans on paper! Use **THE VEGETABLE GARDEN** (available for free download from The Learning Store at University of Wisconsin Extension Publications at <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/index.aspx>) You'll get lots of ideas on how to plan your garden in this handy booklet!



My Garden Plan

## March

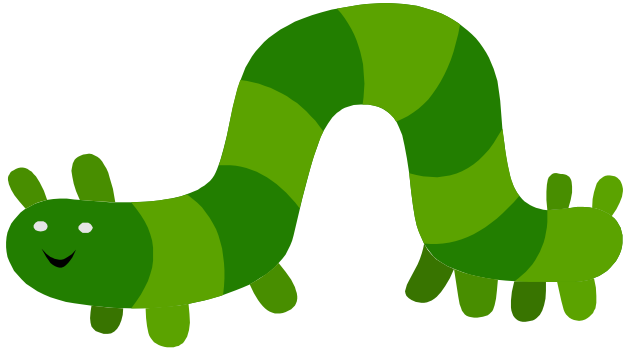
Chipmunks aren't the only things that like to chew on your garden. INSECTS probably have their eyes on it, too.

But before you get after all those insects, it's important to remember that **MANY** of the insects near your garden are helpful. Lady Beetles and Green Lacewings are two species that are **FRIENDS** in your garden. Each small lady beetle can eat between 16 and 22 aphids each day. And those aphids are insects that are eating (umm...sucking) up some of your plants!



Don't forget the spiders and the birds! Many are your friends, too! They are busy gobbling up insect pests!

Get ready for the summer insects. **Learn how to identify at least FIVE insects that you might find in your garden.** Can you figure out if they are **HELPFUL** or **HARMFUL**? A good but inexpensive book to look at is the *Peterson First Guide to Insects of North America*.



**HINT:** **Diseases**, like insects, can be a problem in your garden. You can avoid many disease problems in your garden by purchasing disease-resistant plants.