

Food for Thought Newsletter

October

Here's our Pick 'n' Mix of ideas for you to choose from for your Food for Thought activities. Whatever you do, don't forget to take pictures and share them with your Uganda partner school. October is usually a dry and sunny month without too much rain, so brilliant for continuing your outdoor growing. Perennial (grows every year) fruit is a brilliant idea in the school plot. Whether you garden or not it just keeps growing! This month we look at strawberries and rhubarb in the plot. You may find parents/grandparents and supporters of your school garden are happy to donate perennial fruit plants from extras they have on their allotments. Rhubarb, strawberries and raspberries (autumn fruiting) are ideal for this.

Jobs for outside

Appeal for rhubarb

Multiply your strawberries

Planning for Mother's day – What?

What you can grow now

Jobs for outside

As autumn leaves fall they can make a mess and crush seedlings on the plot. Take ten minutes with your children and get them picked up from the growing plot and throw into the compost. Watch out for wildlife like toads, slow worms and frogs who will be slowing down as autumn arrives.

Also, weed carefully as the warm weather keeps weed seeds germinating. Harvest any crops still worth eating and enjoy them before they go to waste.

If you have currant bushes of any kind, (blackcurrants, redcurrants) check out our [you tube video](#) on taking cuttings. It's so easy!



Multiply your strawberries

If you have strawberry runners it's a good idea to snip off dead leaves and make sure those runners are pushed into the ground where they can make successful new plants over the winter. More strawberries for next year – great! If you don't have any strawberries, could one of the children write an appeal for some in your newsletter? A friendly parent will be happy to donate some and may come and help the children get them planted about 30cm apart. See our [You Tube video](#) for step by step guidance.



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Appeal for rhubarb

Rhubarb is brilliant in the school garden, from late February to the end of July you have copious amounts of rhubarb to use in Food Tech, to send home with children or to sell to raise funds for seeds, plants and equipment. Not only that it's perennial, which means it grows itself whether you garden or not! If you wish you had rhubarb in the school garden, then ask in your newsletter if any parent or grandparent can give you a rhubarb crown. This is the ideal time of year to split and plant a rhubarb crown and it's very easy to plant. Just make sure you give your rhubarb a whole square metre to grow in, cover (mulch) round the crown with cardboard to make sure that it has no weeds as it settles in. This is possibly the best fruit for a school garden.

Order some seed catalogues

By ordering on line, you can receive seed catalogues through the post free of charge. Next month when they've arrived, your children can plot and dream about what they want to grow next year. This is a perfect wet break activity and you could then put out an appeal to parents to donate the types of seeds you want to the school.

Planning for Mother's day—What?

This may seem very premature, but large sacks of daffodils are very cheap and being sold everywhere at this time of year. If possible, choose the smaller bulb varieties. A great activity is to plant up 2-4 bulbs per pot (about 10cm deep), label clearly with the child's name and put them outside on your growing plot where they can get rain and sun. You can go out each month and check on how they're doing. This is great for science learning. Just leave them alone, and by March, these will be flowering and make a wonderful Mother's day gift. Don't forget to plant spares in case new children join you or there are some which fail to flourish.

(picture: school based tree nursery in Uganda, raising tree seedlings for distribution to schools to provide shade—funded by a DDE donor after a cream tea fundraising event).

What you can grow

Here are some ideas for you if you want to keep your growing going.

Ask for rhubarb crown donations and get your growing going.

Sow winter lettuce and a couple of short rows of winter hardy peas and broad beans towards the end of the month to provide you with an early crop next Spring. These will overwinter.

You can grow herbs on the classroom windowsill and they might make nice Christmas presents in 8 weeks' time. Basil is ideal. Sow thinly in a pot and keep moist and on a sunny windowsill.

