

Food for Thought Newsletter

JANUARY

At last, the business of Christmas term is over and you are into the new year with lots of enthusiasm and New Year's Resolutions. You'll be glad to know it's a quiet time in the garden but there are still things you can be doing to warm up the passion and enthusiasm for gardening in your children. If you need more ideas for outside, you can look at newsletters from September to December for practical tasks outside and it's not too late to do last month's Mother's Day challenge. Whatever you choose to do, take pictures and share them with your Uganda partner school. At this time of year some seasoned allotment owners are pruning their blackcurrants. Why not appeal in your newsletter for rooted blackcurrant cuttings ready for Spring?

Jobs for outside

Do a seed inventory

Map your garden growing plan for this year

Make new beds – the easiest way

What you can grow

Jobs for outside

Top up any cardboard you are using to mulch and protect beds. These will be lovely and clean when you remove the card and ready to go in March. Cardboard layering also keeps the soil nice and warm and you can always make holes to plant through later on if you wish. Don't disturb your composters at this time of year, there may be hibernating frogs, toads, hedgehogs and slow worms in there. If you have onions, garlic or broad beans growing, carefully hand weed round them and throw weeds onto the



Do a seed inventory

A really good rainy day task; get children to check the seed packets. Are they going to be in date by spring? Can children practice alphabet skills by putting the vegetables in alphabet order? Do any packets need repairing? Do you need to acquire any seeds to meet the plans you made in December? Why not ask a child to write an appeal to put in your newsletter. You can also order free seed catalogues online.



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Map your garden growing plan for this year

Draw maps of the garden, children can use measuring skills and drawing skills to identify what and where any perennial fruit and veg are, and how much space they need to grow, do you have enough bed space for everything you want to grow this year?

If you are beginning to get a collection of perennial (grows every year) fruit, then it's best if this has its own bed. Annual veggies need more sunshine so make sure you have bed space where the sun shines. Perennial fruit can do well in some shade.

Make new beds – the easiest way

If your children want to grow more things than you have room for, think of making a new bed by layering up a lot of cardboard on grassy or weedy ground to prepare a new bed for spring. Weight it down with anything heavy and by the time you need it, the grass will have died down.



What you can grow

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

Herbs on a windowsill can bring us a bit of winter cheer. Use recycled plastic lids to keep your windowsills clean and plant herb seeds like basil in pots for the windowsill. Label clearly with the child's name and they can check on them each morning to see how they are doing. Can they use ruler skills to measure their plant's growth and make a column chart?

