

4-H

Mini Gardens

Proficiency Program

A Members's Guide

Overview

Mini Gardens is an interesting 4-H project. You gain insight into nature and develop a better understanding of the basic principles of science relating to plant growth. You will acquire the knowledge and develop the skills needed to care for plants in a limited space. You will learn effective, safe methods of insect control and management. This project will help you develop an appreciation of gardening, the aesthetic value of flowers, and the use of gardening as an educational learning experience. You will appreciate the effect that fresh vegetables have upon the health of a person. Through mini gardens, you will get to explore all aspects of vegetable and ornamental gardening as well as the therapeutic values of engaging in horticulture.

You can get more information on mini gardens from bulletins, magazines, and books. Ask your school or city/county librarian for help. Your 4-H office and county extension agent have a number of publications on different aspects of mini gardens as well. Local junior colleges and universities may offer gardening classes and have experts who may be able to come speak to your 4-H group. California is known for its agriculture - look for farmers, horticulturalists and others who may be willing to talk with you about raising plants. Local gardening stores and agricultural supply

houses may offer classes and other educational activities as well as selling plants and supplies.

The **4-H mini gardens proficiency program** helps you learn what you need to know about your 4-H mini gardens project. There are five levels you may participate in - or you may choose to complete only one or two. The first level is "**Explorer**" in which you begin to learn about many different aspects of growing plants. In the second level, "**Producer**," you learn more about different types of plants, their reproduction and diseases. In the "**Consumer**" level (third) you become experienced in many aspects of mini gardens. The fourth level, "**Leader**," allows you to really "take off" in showing your own leadership potential. The last level, "**Researcher**," is for those individuals who want to research a topic in depth, and prepare a paper on a fascinating subject about mini gardens.

As you work through your mini gardens project, have your leader initial and date each skill item in a proficiency level when you have completed it. When you have finished all items in a proficiency level, have your leader sign the Certificate of Achievement and order a medal for you from the 4-H office. Congratulations - you have learned a great deal!

Humboldt County
4-H Incentives and Recognition Program

name _____

Level I

Explorer

Guidelines for Project Proficiency Award - **Plant Science** (example projects: gardening & horticulture, mini gardens, container gardening, ornamental horticulture, plant & soil science)

- _____ 1. Identify and describe three species of trees or plants.
- _____ 2. Identify parts of a plant from a diagram or live example.
- _____ 3. Describe the basic requirements for good soil.
- _____ 4. Describe the basic garden preparation and maintenance equipment that a beginner needs.
- _____ 5. Explain the nutritional requirements of your plants.
- _____ 6. Explain how to tell when your plant is ill and where to look for a solution.
- _____ 7. Describe the life cycle of a plant starting with seed and ending with a mature plant.
- _____ 8. Find and use an organic way of fighting insect pests.
- _____ 9. Tag six plants with both the Latin and the common names.
- _____ 10. Submit management records for a minimum of 90 days that indicates how often you provide water, fertilizer, weed control, and general care of your garden.
- _____ 11. Demonstrate basic pruning techniques and equipment necessary for your plants.
- _____ 12. Define fifteen important, basic terms used in your project area.
- _____ 13. Explain two common courtesies when working with a group.
- _____ 14. Describe how to safely use three tools for gardening.
- _____ 15. Share one aspect of your project with other project members.

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Level II

Producer

Guidelines for Project Proficiency Award - Plant Science (example projects: gardening & horticulture, mini gardens, container gardening, ornamental horticulture, plant & soil science)

- ____ 1. Identify and describe six different species of trees or plants.
- ____ 2. Give one example of a plant used for each of the purposes listed: cut flower, foliage accent, cut foliage, flower color, windbreak, lawn tree, parkway, species, hedge, border, barrier, background, fragrance, utility-medical, utility-food.
- ____ 3. Name four plant growth factors and explain the basics of photosynthesis.
- ____ 4. Collect seeds from vegetables, field crops, flowers, shrubs and trees. Mount and label the seeds you have collected.
- ____ 5. Participate in four different ways of propagation. Example: budding, cuttings, plant division, layering, grafting.
- ____ 6. Describe how your plant reproduces.
- ____ 7. Experiment with at least two types of fertilizer, then tell which you prefer and why.
- ____ 8. Demonstrate how to sanitize the equipment used with your plants.
- ____ 9. Describe and demonstrate what you can do to protect your plant during hot and cold weather.
- ____ 10. Describe and give control measures for at least three diseases or problem conditions.
- ____ 11. Visit an established operation and learn how the plants are cared for and marketed.
- ____ 12. Prepare one food dish from an edible plant grown in your project and share it with your family or project group.
- ____ 13. Identify and describe three species native to your area.
- ____ 14. Explain the difference between fine, medium, and coarse and how it will affect the appearance of the plant.
- ____ 15. Keep an account of cash expenses for equipment and materials.
- ____ 16. Do something creative with your project.
- ____ 17. Display your produce outside your project.
- ____ 18. Help someone else by sharing your knowledge or by giving away a product from your project to demonstrate positive citizenship.

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Level III

Consumer

Guidelines for Project Proficiency Award - **Plant Science** (example projects: gardening & horticulture, mini gardens, container gardening, ornamental horticulture, plant & soil science)

- _____ 1. Test your soil, then describe how you would replenish the soil with needed nutrients.
- _____ 2. Contact a local, state, or national association related to your project and determine what this association has to offer for you.
- _____ 3. Describe the destruction of plants by various animals.
- _____ 4. Make a chart that explains how good selection can improve your stock. Describe self and cross pollination and the advantages and disadvantages of each.
- _____ 5. Invite and introduce a guest speaker at one of your meetings.
- _____ 6. Name two pros and two cons of chemical pesticides.
- _____ 7. Describe four types of soil structure and what you can do to improve each.
- _____ 8. Demonstrate three methods of weed control and explain when you would apply each method.
- _____ 9. Report on a secondary aspect or by-product of your project industry.
- _____ 10. Keep an account of cash expenses, time and labor charges. At the end of the growing season, compare your crop yield to your expenses.
- _____ 11. Keep a personal reference library of literature that will be helpful in your project.
- _____ 12. Describe five things you should consider in landscaping your home and tell why.
- _____ 13. Explain how to irrigate the following: container grown plants, lawns, and field crops.
- _____ 14. Take part in a demonstration or judging contest specific to your project area.
- _____ 15. Report the history of one aspect of your project. (equipment, technique, origin, etc.)
- _____ 16. Alone or with a group plan an activity related to your project.

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Level IV

Leader

Guidelines for Project Proficiency Award - **Plant Science** (example projects: gardening & horticulture, mini gardens, container gardening, ornamental horticulture, plant & soil science)

- ____ 1. Complete one year as Junior or Teen leader in this project.
- ____ 2. Assist younger members in designing and constructing needed equipment.
- ____ 3. Prepare teaching materials for use at project meetings.
- ____ 4. Develop and put on a demonstration or judging event or train a junior team for such an event.
- ____ 5. Speak on a project-based subject before an organization other than your 4-H group.
- ____ 6. Assist at a horticultural event in your community.
- ____ 7. Assist younger members in learning a specific topic in the project.
- ____ 8. Develop your own special activity. Chart your progress, plan the activities, analyze successes and problems, and report on findings.

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Level IV

Leader

Guidelines for Project Proficiency Award - **Plant Science** (example projects: gardening & horticulture, mini gardens, container gardening, ornamental horticulture, plant & soil science)

- _____ 1. Complete one year as Junior or Teen leader in this project.
- _____ 2. Assist younger members in designing and constructing needed equipment.
- _____ 3. Prepare teaching materials for use at project meetings.
- _____ 4. Develop and put on a demonstration or judging event or train a junior team for such an event.
- _____ 5. Speak on a project-based subject before an organization other than your 4-H group.
- _____ 6. Assist at a horticultural event in your community.
- _____ 7. Assist younger members in learning a specific topic in the project.
- _____ 8. Develop your own special activity. Chart your progress, plan the activities, analyze successes and problems, and report on findings.