



The Happy Forager

School gardening projects are often beset by problems: **apart from the endless weeding that rarely gets to the root of the problem, there are difficulties in trying to engage children in fixed learning outcomes in a large environment that entices you to run free and follow your senses and the primal need to indulge your own curiosity. (That and the end-less weeding).**

However if the right plant materials are created, and the spirit of harvesting, gathering and experimenting are allowed to lead, then deep learning will take place automatically.

Examples include perennial plants growing within the landscape that can be foraged for immediate salads or soup making over a fire—what fun to be a hunter/gatherer again? And how important to learn what is edible? Seasonal permissions to gather daffodils for Mother's Day; fruits and nuts that can thrive on a little care but no onerous "maintenance"; play with naturally occurring long grasses or wild flowers.



Whilst learning about the cycle of growth is often more accessible to children indoors (with opaque plan-ning vessels for planting vulnerable seeds and displaying the roots etc), **outdoors** is fantastic for exploratory fun with mud pies, large scale experi-ments such as blacking out grass to observe photosynthesis, or the close observation involved in the creation of large scale ephemeral artworks.

