

How to use this guide

Firstly, **thank you so much** for downloading our plant-along activity book!

We have completely enjoyed putting it together, taking inspiration from some of our favourite family activities and crafts we have been doing at Sweetpea Grow & Play - which we now gladly hand over to you to create your own special memories!

(Oh, and do feel free to share your highlights with us via email - bookings.sweetpea@gmail.com or tag us on socials: [instagram.com/sweetpeagrowandplay.co.uk](https://www.instagram.com/sweetpeagrowandplay.co.uk). We would love to know your thoughts and ideas for the next editions!)

We made the Sweetpea Grow & Play Plant-Along Guide with one big hope in mind - to help families slow down, explore together, and feel more connected to nature (and each other). You don't need to get everything "right." This isn't about perfect crafts or tidy planting - it's about curiosity, laughter, and the small discoveries that happen along the way.

Reading and Wondering

The Sweetpea Grow & Play story is designed to be read aloud with your child - you can prompt them to join in whenever they want - repeating little phrases or adding their own ideas. You might find yourself pausing to act out little parts like crunching leaves, or to talk about what's happening, asking things like, "how does that make you feel?" Those moments of wondering together are where the magic really happens.

Joining In

The activities are ideas to spark hands-on fun. Read a page together and see what catches your child's imagination. Some children love to take the lead; others prefer to watch first and join in later. Younger ones might enjoy feeling textures, naming colours, or simply helping to pour or scoop. Older children can start to take ownership - reading bits aloud, making predictions, or coming up with new ideas to try. There's no one right way to do it; follow their curiosity and let it guide you.

A Note on Care and Safety

Growing and making can be wonderfully messy! A quick handwash before and after helps keep things safe and comfortable. And as you explore, it can be fun to chat about safety together - building confidence and autonomy. Our favourite game is to pretend we forgot how to wash our hands, acting like clueless aliens while our three year old shouts the instructions at us! 🤖

Sharing and Retelling

After you've finished reading or planting, try asking your child to tell you what happened in their own words - maybe a short sentence or a funny detail they remember. Children love to share their version of events, and it helps them make sense of what they've seen and done.

⭐ Most of all, enjoy this time together.

With every seed you plant, story you share, and muddy hand you wash, you're growing something beautiful - connection, confidence, and care for our world. 🌱

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Autumn
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Sweetpea Grow & Play

Plant-along activity book



Hello little gardeners! 🍁



Welcome to the first edition of Sweetpea Grow & Play's Plant-along Activity Book!

Autumn is here, and the world around us is changing. Leaves are crunching under our boots, nights are getting darker earlier, and the air smells fresh and earthy. It's the perfect time to slow down, notice the magic of the season, and get stuck into some fun outdoor learning!

In these pages you'll find activities to try in the garden, at home, and in the classroom - each one helping us learn about the world through planting, harvesting, counting, storytelling, and creating. Let's dive into it, and see what autumn has in store for us!

🍂 September - Seeds, Spirals & New Beginnings

September is the month of fresh starts. The holidays are over, children head back to school, and the garden begins to slow after summer's rush. The air turns crisp, apples fall from the trees, and it's the perfect time to tuck seeds into soil for next year's flowers. In many communities, Harvest Festival is celebrated - a time to be thankful for the food we grow and share.

Gardening Tip 🌱

Sweetpeas are best sown in early Autumn. Use recycled milk bottles as containers: cut them in half, fill the bottom with compost, plant your sweetpea seeds, and pop the top back on as a lid to keep warmth and moisture in.

Once the seedlings are 4 inches tall, remove the lid and transplant to the garden.

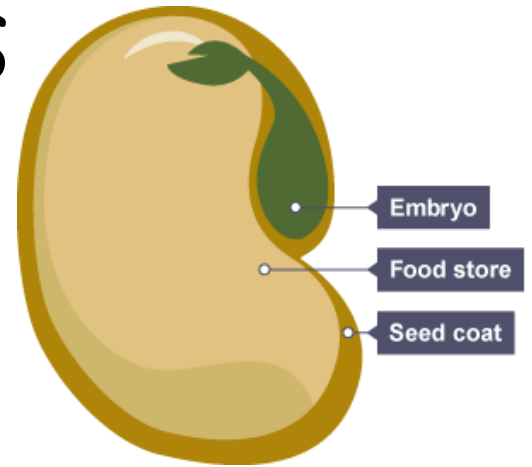
💡 Remember, Sweetpeas are climbers, so provide some structure for them to thrive eg. bamboo canes, a wigwam or a trellis.



Activities

Science – Inside a Seed:

Carefully split open a sweetpea or bean seed. Spot the tiny “baby plant” inside and talk about how the seed has its own food store to help it grow at the very beginning.



Maths – Spirals in Nature:

Explore how a Sweetpea stem curls into a spiral!

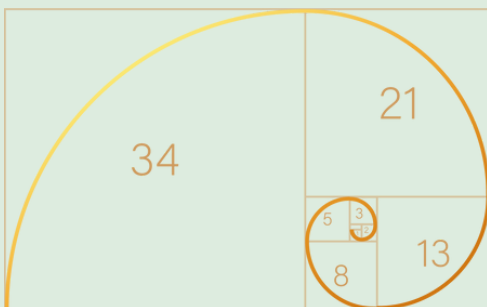
Younger children: Count how many turns it makes, pretend to be a spiral, moving up and around in circles

Older children: explore the Fibonacci sequence - a magical pattern also found in shells and sunflowers

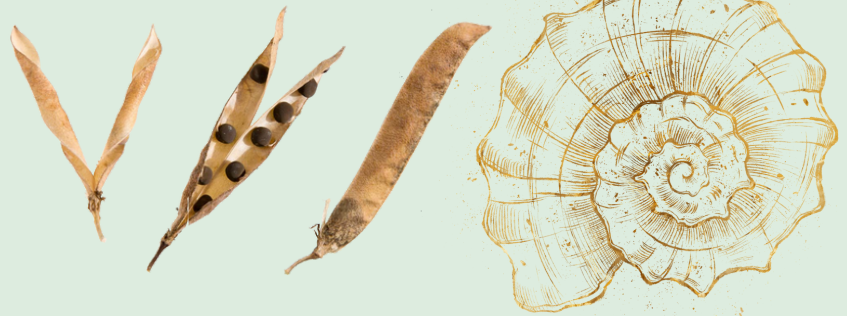
The Fibonacci sequence is a famous series of numbers with a pattern. The pattern is that every number is added to the one before it. Here's the first few parts of the sequence:

0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89

As you can see, $1 + 1 = 2$, $2 + 1 = 3$, $3 + 2 = 5$ and so on. It's a really simple progression and can go on forever. What's impressive about this sequence is that you get a spiral if you turn those numbers into boxes.



bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zm3rdnb



English – The Seed's Adventure:

Imagine you are a seed.

Think about being tucked into soil, rained on, warmed by the sun, and finally pushing up into the light.

What do you see?

What do you feel?

Younger children: Pretend to be the seed, acting out your journey

Older children: Write or draw a story about your adventure



Art/DT – Milk Bottle Planters:

Decorate your recycled milk bottle planters with paints and natural materials before sowing your seeds.



October - Harvest & Celebrate

October brings shorter days, chilly mornings, and golden leaves tumbling from the trees. It's also a month of celebration - from Harvest Festival and Halloween to Diwali the festival of light. Pumpkins ripen in the fields, and their glowing lanterns brighten the darker evenings

Gardening Tip 🌱

Pumpkins are ready to harvest when their skins are tough and they sound hollow when tapped. Cut them from the vine with a long stem attached, then store them somewhere cool and dry.

Our favourite pumpkin picks -grown at Sweetpea Grow & Play-



Goosebumps

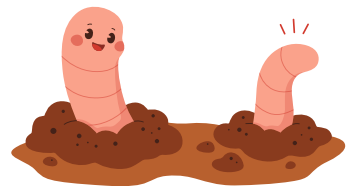


Why not grow your own pumpkin next year? - get a head start on your planning and build a no-dig bed today!

No
DIG!

means not ploughing, digging or turning over your soil. Instead, we build up the surface with layers of organic matter - compost, leaves and mulch

Which protects the underground microorganisms - bacteria and fungi - and the natural drainage channels made by worms, keeping our soil alive and healthy!



- 1) Lay down some cardboard on the ground (this keeps weeds away)
- 2) Sprinkle a thick layer of compost and old leaves on top
- 3) Plant seeds straight into this soft bed!



Let's make a whimsical sweetpea wigwam!

Step 1: Find 8 long tree branches or bamboo canes. Arrange them standing up in a circle, leaving a larger gap for the door

Step 2: Wrap twine or ribbon tightly around the top of the branches, securing them in place

Step 3: Sow Sweetpea seeds at the base of each branch and water regularly. As shoots grow, wrap and tie them around your wigwam!

Gardening Tip: Picking your Sweetpea flowers will encourage the plant to keep blooming all season long. Cut several flowers at the base of the flower stem and tie with string to make a beautifully scented bouquet to gift to someone special

Do you have an elderly neighbour? How do you think they would feel if you surprised them with a handmade gift of flowers?

Activities

Science – Pumpkin Exploration:

Open a pumpkin and scoop out the slimy insides. Notice the textures and separate the seeds, chatting about how pumpkins carry hundreds of “baby plants” inside them.



Maths – Seed Counting & Measuring:

Guess how many seeds your pumpkin holds, then count in groups of 2, 5, or 10. Measure your pumpkin's circumference with a tape measure, and compare sizes with others. Dry your seeds on a Kitchen towel for a few days and then store in a paper envelope for planting next year.

History – The Three Sisters:

The "Three Sisters" is a Native American companion planting technique that grows corn, beans, and squash together.

- Corn provides a stalk for the beans to climb
- Beans put nitrogen in the soil for the other plants to feed on
- squash's big leaves block weeds from growing and keeps the soil moist and cool!



Colour in the three-sisters artwork (on the next page) and label each plant with its benefits

English – Pumpkin Poems:

Use your senses to describe your pumpkin - its colour, weight, texture, and smell. Try an acrostic poem for the word PUMPKIN.

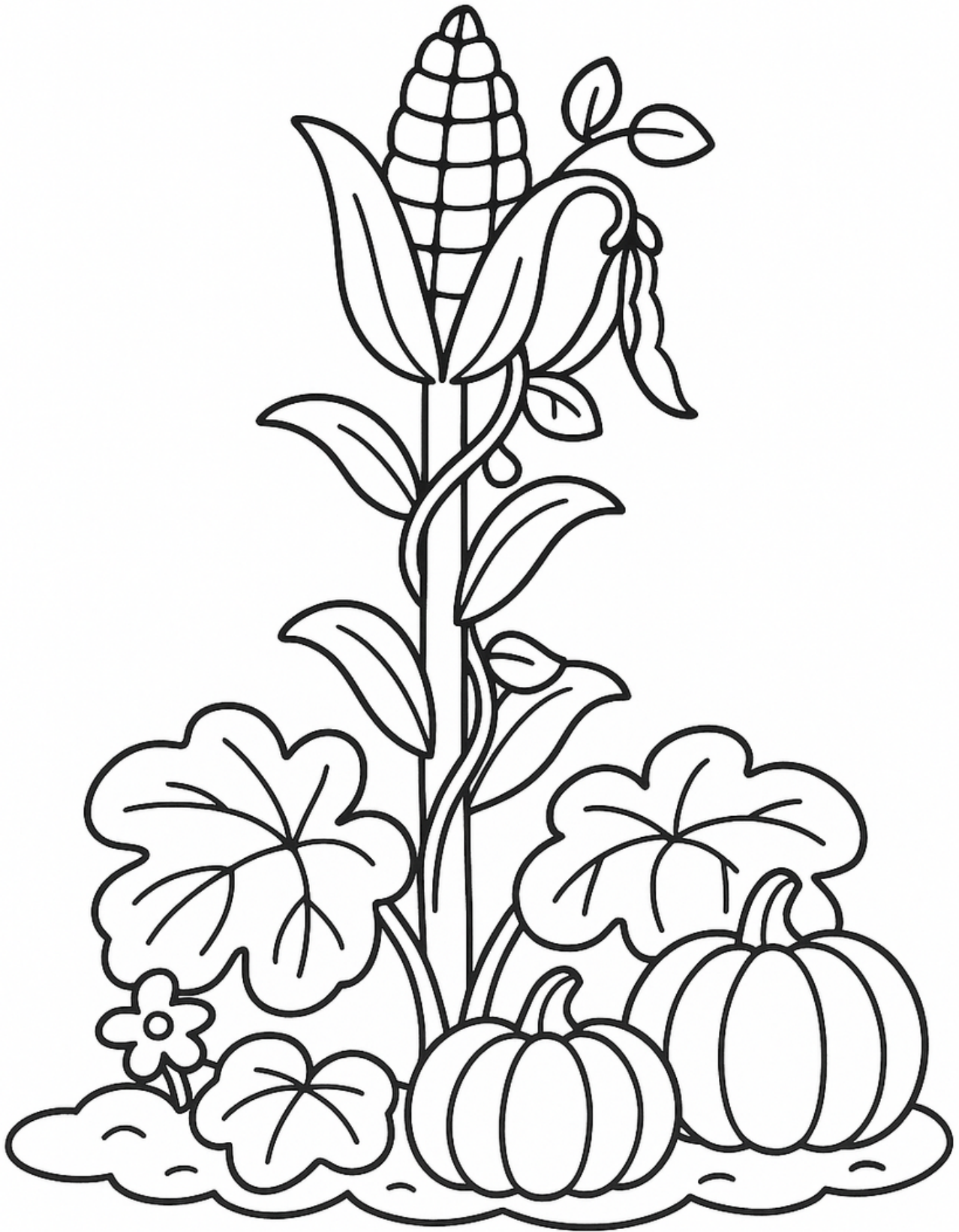
Purple
Unicorns
Might
Prefer
Kale
In
Noodles



Art/DT – Carving & Decorating:

Carve lanterns (with adult help) or decorate pumpkins with pva glue and leaves instead. Save the seeds to roast as a nutritious snack or string into necklaces!

THE THREE SISTERS





❄ November Giving & Growing

November can sometimes feel quiet and thoughtful. Bonfire Night lights up the sky, Remembrance Sunday brings moments of reflection, and in many homes the season of gift-giving begins. While the garden rests, we can still save seeds for next year, plant spring bulbs and grow herbs indoors on sunny windowsills.

Let's make a bulb lasagna!

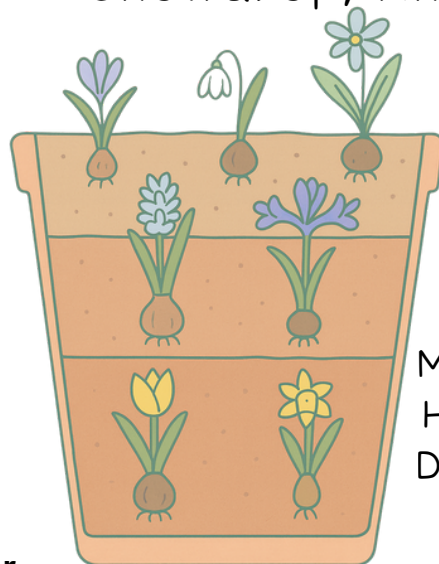
A bulb lasagna is a clever way to layer your flower bulbs for beautiful blooms all spring and summer! It's super easy and fun to do - you just need a large plant pot, some gravel, soil and flower bulbs of your choice.

We suggest these flowers for a stunning range of smells and colours!

Start at the bottom, adding a couple handfuls of gravel before adding layers of soil and bulbs

Tip: Plant any leftover bulbs around the garden, or make extra bulb lasagnas to gift to your friends and family for Christmas!

Top layer: Crocus, Snowdrop, Anemone



Mid layer:
Hyacinth,
Dwarf Iris

Bottom layer:
Tulips, Daffodils

Gardening Tip 🌱 Shorter, darker days can leave us craving a boost of vitality, and there's no better way to top up your energy stores than by eating fresh micro-greens. Young seedlings are packed with vitamins and minerals, and are so quick and easy to grow. Just sprinkle in a sandwich or mix in with your dinner!



Easy peasy microgreens!

1. Wash a plastic fruit container (a raspberry tray is perfect). Lay out a sheet cardboard with the tray on top. Draw around the base of the tray with a marker. Cut the shape out of the cardboard and set aside.
2. Fill the tray with compost and lightly water. Cover with a single layer of seeds and cover with the cardboard cutout, place on a warm windowsill with a can of beans as a weight on top (helps germination)
3. Check on your seeds every day, remove the cardboard when green shoots appear. Lightly sprinkle water on them as the soil dries out (poke a finger below the soil to feel if it's dried out)



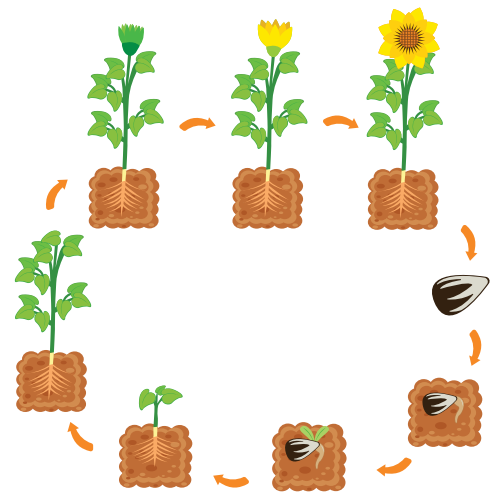
4. Snip off the shoots when they are 1-2 inches tall, adding into smoothies, sprinkling on lunch or stirring through pasta!



Activities

Science – Plant Life Cycles:

Draw a simple cycle showing how a seed becomes a seedling, then a plant, then a flower, and finally creates new seeds.



Maths – Seed Foraging and Sorting:

On your next walk, collect acorns, conkers and flower seeds. We're going to compare our collection! Sort them by size, shape, or colour, then use them to make repeating patterns. Bonus activity - use digital scales to weigh your seeds. Which weighs more - 3 conkers or 10 acorns?



History – The Amazing Healing Powers of Yarrow!

For a very long time (60,000 years!), people have used Yarrow as a medicinal plant. The leaves and flowers were used in lotions to help with minor cuts and to soothe skin. Yarrow's latin name *Achillea Millefolium* comes from the greek hero Achilles, who helped his soldiers with its healing powers.

**Can you research the other healing uses of Yarrow?
See if you can find a Yarrow sample in the wild!**

English – Letter of Thanks:

Write a note or draw a picture to give alongside a bouquet. Talk about how words and drawings can make people feel loved and appreciated.



Art/DT – Leaf Crowns:

Collect fallen leaves and glue to a cardboard strip headband to make a beautiful Autumn crown!



You're
awesome

Closing NOTE

Well
done

As autumn comes to a close, we've saved seeds for the future, harvested what's ready, and shared gifts of flowers and words with loved ones. These months remind us that nature has its own rhythm - one of growing, harvesting, and resting. By joining in with these activities, you've not only learned about the world around you, but also celebrated its beauty, creativity, and generosity.



Saying gratitude helps us to remember all the wonderful gifts of life, and to give back with thanks for all we have;

(speak these out loud and add some that are personal to you)

- ~ I'm grateful for my family
- ~ I'm grateful for my friends
- ~ I'm grateful for yummy food
- ~ I'm grateful for my body that heals and grows
- ~ I'm grateful to learn new things
- ~ I'm grateful for nature and the seasons
- ~ I'm grateful for a new day to experience life's magic!



You
Did It!

We at Sweetpea Grow & Play are grateful for your support & community! Thank you for downloading this activity book - please do share your thoughts and pictures on our socials & google page!