

THE CURIOUS GARDEN

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by Peter Brown

Ages: 5-7; Grades: K-2

Running time: 10 minutes

Themes: Growth and Change, Seasons and Nature, Urban Life, Conservation

SUMMARY

Liam is a curious boy, living in a drab and lifeless city. Out on an exploration one day, he discovers the most unusual thing – plants! Inspired to help them grow, Liam becomes a self-taught gardener. It turns out that he is not the only curious one around. The garden itself, becoming restless and curious about the city around it, begins to grow and grow. Soon, there are gardens in every nook and cranny, and gardeners too! This delightful movie will help children appreciate the beauty and power of plants and the natural world. They will also see how one person can inspire great change.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the life cycle of plants and flowers.
- Students will identify the things that plants need to grow.
- Students will design and write about a garden.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Bring a sample of various dry seeds for the students to observe. The children should draw each seed and, if possible, write down any observations that they have of the seed. Then, have students guess what the seed will grow to become. Give them some examples that are easy to identify such as corn, beans, and peas. Also bring some examples of flower seeds, which tend to be more difficult to identify. Be sure to save the seed packets so that you don't forget! These seeds can be used for the next Before Viewing Activity. Brainstorm with students what things seeds need to plant and grow. Make a list of all of the students' ideas and then narrow it down to 4 essential components: warmth(sunlight), water, nutrients (soil), and air. Conduct a science experiment with one control group providing all of the components and then

removing one component from each other group. Observe the seeds over time and record/discuss the results.

Discuss the word "curious" with students. Guiding questions:

- What does *curious* mean?
- What do curious people normally do?
- Describe a time that you were curious.

Then, tell students that they are about to see a movie called "The Curious Garden". Ask:

- How do you think that a garden could be curious?
- What kinds of things might a curious garden do?
- What questions do you have about this movie?
- What predictions do you have?

Encourage students to watch and listen for ways that the garden is curious. Tell them to look for any other characters that are curious too.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Take a field trip to a local greenhouse or botanical garden. If possible, arrange for a tour guide or employee to talk to the children about the different plants that they see. Allow a quiet time for the students to pick a place to sit and illustrate a plant or flower of their choice. This is an especially enjoyable activity in a botanical garden or park.

Teach the life cycle of a plant. Begin with guiding questions:

- Where do seeds come from?
- What do seeds make?
- What happens to seeds when they are given the things that plants need to live? (Refer to the list generated in the Before Viewing Activity.)
- How do seeds grow?

Next, make a poster with the students that shows the life cycle of a plant. Beans are a good example because most students have seen green beans and the seeds inside of the pods. The poster should list the steps of the life cycle and have an illustration accompanying each step. The steps for a bean plant are:

1. A plant begins as a seed.

2. The seed sprouts.
3. The seed grows roots.
4. The sprout grows into a plant.
5. The plant grows a fruit.
6. The fruit holds the new seeds inside.
7. The seeds are dropped and the cycle starts over.

This poster can be reproduced into cards that the students can color, cut out, and glue onto their own poster.

Design a school garden with the class. This is a fun and on-going project that will require a small amount of space and some basic materials to get started. Talk with students about what kinds of plants they want to grow. Work together to design a layout, having each student draw a model of the garden. Extend this activity by having students write several sentences about what they are planning on growing. Consult the School Garden Wizard website for help getting the garden started <http://www.schoolgardenwizard.org/>.

Students can keep a written or pictorial journal of the garden as it grows.

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