

PLANTING A RAINBOW

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by Lois Ehlert

Grades: PreK-2

Themes: Gardens, plants, life cycle, colors, families

Running Time: 8 minutes

SUMMARY

Planting a garden is an activity that brings the wonders and joys of the life cycle into the lives of both children and adults. This ageless process is captured in this vibrant and poetically simple production based on the book by Lois Ehlert. Children will be captivated by the beautiful flowers and plants that emerge as the seasons change. This inspiring movie will awaken the gardener in everyone and may even motivate you and your students to plant your own rainbow!

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the life cycle of plants and flowers.
- Students will identify the things that plants need to grow.
- Students will be able to identify flowers by their colors.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Bring a sample of various dry seeds for the students to observe. The children should draw a picture of 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 seeds need to plant and grow. Make a list of all of the students' ideas and then narrow it down to four essential components: warmth, water, nutrients (food), and air. Conduct a science experiment with one control group providing all of the components, then remove one component from each other group. Observe the seeds over time and record/discuss the results.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Discuss the colors of the different flowers that the narrator in the story grew with her/his mom. Challenge students to recall the names and the colors of the flowers. If children need help, refer to the book, *Planting a Rainbow*. Using the book, have students pick a plant or flower of each color to illustrate and make a mini-book about it. Each page should represent a color and a corresponding flower. For example, one page might say, "Tulips are red," and show a colored picture of a tulip on it.

Take a field trip to a local greenhouse or botanical garden. If possible, arrange for a tour guide or employee to talk to 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 become?
- 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 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 in the soil 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.

Other productions about plants and gardening available from Weston Woods are:

JOHNNY APPLESEED, by Reeve Lindbergh,
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TIME OF WONDER by Robert McCloskey

Other productions by Lois Ehlert are:

CHICKA CHICKA BOOM BOOM, by Bill Martin

Jr. & John Archambault, ill. by Lois Ehlert

CHICKA CHICKA 1, 2, 3, by Bill Martin Jr.,

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