

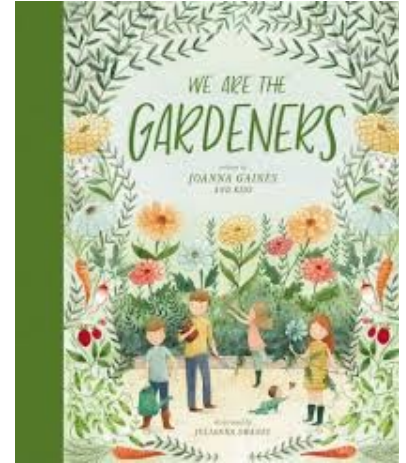
We Are the Gardeners

OVERVIEW: Through trial and error, a family of four children learns first how to take care of plants and then how to become vegetable and fruit gardeners. The book is a great springboard for students to consider what plants need to grow and what obstacles gardeners face when growing them.

GRADES: 3-5

OBJECTIVES: The student will be able to:

- List what plants need to grow.
- Describe some obstacles that gardeners face when trying to grow fruits and vegetables outdoors.
- With a small group, conduct further research on an aspect of gardening mentioned in the book.
- Write a paragraph or short essay about a time when they experienced failure the first time they tried something, but were eventually successful when they kept trying.



MATERIALS:

The book *We Are The Gardeners* by Joanna Gaines.

One copy for each student:

KWL worksheet

My Gardening Research Notes worksheet

My Gardening Research Report worksheet

We Are The Gardeners Essay worksheet

Websites or books that small groups can use to do further research on a gardening topic

PROCEDURE: Explain to students that the class is going to learn about gardening and what it takes to become a successful gardener. First, ask students to complete the first two parts of the KWL worksheet about gardening (below). Discuss with students what they think they know about gardening and what they would like to learn. List responses where all can see.

Next, read the book *We Are the Gardeners* by Joanna Gaines.

Ask students to complete the final section of the KWL sheet. Then as a whole class, discuss what students learned. After reading the book, ask if they still have questions about gardening.

Garden Research

NOTE: The teacher will divide students into small groups to research a specific gardening topic and report back to the whole class. The number of small groups and topics researched will depend on the individual class. Below are some of the topics that can be researched that are mentioned in the book *We Are the Gardeners*. The teacher can choose from the research topics below or include some other topics that students were curious about. For research topics:

- Is it true that plants grow better if you talk to them?
- What other bugs besides aphids are “villains” of the garden?
- What other bugs besides ladybugs are the “heroes” of the garden?
- How do worms turn old roots and leaves into life for the soil? What other creatures that we can see do the same thing as worms?
- What are some of the microscopic living things called organisms that make soil good for plants to grow?
- What are some of the pollinators you might find in a New Jersey garden?
- What does the author mean when she says “*Everything a plant will grow up to be is already hidden inside the seed?*” (Research the parts of a seed.)

Small groups of students will research their garden topic together, but all students will keep notes and write a short report on the findings. Then the groups will report their findings to the class.

Personal Essay

The children in the book keep a little fern to remind them not to give up when things don't work out the first time. They say, “*Every failure or setback teaches us something.*”

Ask students to reflect on a time in their own life when they failed at something the first time, but kept trying and were ultimately successful. How did this process make them feel? Students write a paragraph or short essay on this topic.

EVALUATION:

Completed KWL sheet.

Completed garden research notes and report

Completed personal essay

EXTENSIONS

Teach the NJAITC lessons: *Parts of a Seed and Good Bugs and Bad Bugs in the Garden*

Show the NJAITC powerpoint presentation: *The Cleanup Crew: Worms and Other Decomposers*, included with the lesson *How to Make a Classroom Worm Bin*

All lessons are on the NJAITC website newjersey.agclassroom.org under NJAITC Lessons, Basic Gardening.

New Jersey Learning Standards

Science: 3:LS1.A 4:LS1.A 5:LS1.C

English Language Arts:

Grade 3: RL.CR.3.1 W.IW.3.2 W.NW.3.3 W.WP.3.4 W.WR.3.5 W.SE.3.4
SL.PE.3.1 SL.PI.3.4

Grade 4: RL.CR.4.1 W.IW.4.2 W.IW.4.3 W.NW.4.3 W.WP.4.4 W.WR.4.5
W.SE.4.6 SL.PE.4.1 SL.PE.4.4

Grade 5: RL.CI.5.2 W.WI.5.2 W.NW.5.3 W.WP.5.4 W.WR.5.5 W.SE.5.6
SL.PE.5.1 SL.PI.5.4

NAME _____

What I Know About Gardening

What I Think I Should Learn to Become a Gardener

What I Learned About Gardening

