

Grow with us.



## The Importance of Being Organic

It should be obvious, but many people don't realize that you should never have pesticides near children. Even if adults apply them, chemical pesticides may stay on the plants and in the soil. Children commonly touch a leaf, flower, or fruit and then touch their eyes, nose, or mouth within a short period of time.

An organic garden is both safer and more educational. Your students can learn more about biology and ecology when there are no synthetic chemicals to interfere with the natural processes. If you have pest problems during the first few seasons (before the natural predators migrate into your garden), children will have the opportunity to learn about these pests and about organic solutions. Later, when predators move in, the garden will have a dynamic ecological system of insects and small wildlife. Such a dynamic system cannot take shape in a non-organic garden because pesticides kill beneficial insects as well as pests.

An organic garden can be cost less and result in less maintenance than a non-organic garden, and your yields of fruits and vegetables can be greater. The oft-quoted analogy is that synthetic fertilizers are like a candy bar, while natural fertilizers are like a well-balanced meal. Natural fertilizers such as compost have a much broader range of nutrients, and they stay in the soil longer. In contrast, many chemical fertilizers dissolve and leach out of the soil within weeks, requiring repeated costly application. Decomposing organic matter and natural fertilizers mimic natural processes—they build the soil and make a garden healthier in the long run.

A healthy garden, like a healthy person, suffers from fewer diseases. It is also better at tolerating pest attacks, so your students will be able to enjoy the double benefit of both observing the world of insects and reaping good harvests.

