

ECE WINTER GARDENS



PUTTING THE GARDEN TO BED

- Rake up old plant material to prevent disease, remove stems from annuals and veggies.
- Mulch, mulch, mulch! Give your garden a nice blanket for its long winter nap
 - Choose appropriate mulches for your needs. Straw and leaves on the beds, wood chips for pathways, etc.
 - Find free or cheap mulch at the city or county compost lot, or from arborists looking to share chips.
- Leave stems on native and perennial plants! Insects use them for winter homes.
- Leave the leaves! They provide insulation, nutrients, and a home for critters over the winter.
- Set up [bee hotels](#).
- Add bird feeders with appropriate, non-invasive seeds.
- Drain and put away hoses to avoid freezing.
- Clean and store tools.
- Sing a goodnight song as you put the garden to bed.

OUTDOOR WINTER ACTIVITIES

- Plant ID
- Animal observation & tracking
- Snowshoeing
- Maple tapping (Feb-March)
- Art activities
 - [Ice art](#)
 - Found art collage (leaves, acorns, etc.)



OUTDOOR GROWING IN WINTER

- [Plant garlic in October.](#)
 - Make sure the beds won't be disturbed until July of next year.
- Tulips and daffodils may be planted before hard frost, and are a great early spring surprise!
 - Try planting them in a heart or smiley face if you have space
- Cold frames
 - Can be made cheaply with old windows or PVC
 - Greens and cabbage can grow through most winter weather
- Hoop houses
 - Slightly more involved, but can help extend seasons in both fall and spring
- Cover crops
 - Best for larger beds. Research your crops to avoid aggressive grasses.

INDOOR GROWING

- Grow lights
- Sprouts
- Mushrooms
- Windowsill plants (best for low light things like lettuce)
- Seed starting for the garden
 - Grow shelf kits are pretty affordable, ideal for starting transplants
- Take cuttings of outdoor herbs to keep them growing indoors
- Partner with a local farmer or Ag class to share greenhouse space



INDOOR ACTIVITIES

- Seed saving and sorting
- Guess the seed game
- Food preservation
 - Drying, freezing, and fermentation are ideal for young learners, without the high heat of pressure canning.
- Cooking and baking
 - [WI Chili lunch!](#) February 24th, 2022
 - <https://healthyliving.extension.wisc.edu/programs/harvest-of-the-month/>
 - Seasonal winter recipes from [Celebrating Seasonality](#)
- Potatoes, winter squash, and seed corn are great veggies to learn about this time of year.
- Orange and clove ornaments, etc
- Seed catalog collages.
- Planning for next season's garden.
- Making bee houses and [bird feeder cones](#).
- And of course, books, imaginative play, and guest speakers (family and community members who want to lead activities like snowshoeing, preserving foods, finger knitting, etc.)
 - Winter is the perfect time for stories about hibernation, cultural practices, and cozy foods
 - *Over and Under the Snow* and *Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt* by Kate Messner
 - <http://www.pareadyssetgrow.org/book-list/>



QUESTIONS?

We'd love to hear from you! Reach out to Rooted's Farm to ECE team for any gardening or curriculum questions.

hawthorn@rootedwi.org

erica@rootedwi.org

See more resources at

<https://www.rootedwi.org/for-educators/farm-early-care-education/>

