

Weeding and summer care

Time of Year

Particularly summer time.

Cross Curriculum Relevance

SESE:	Living things, environmental awareness and care.
English:	New words/spelling.
SPHE:	Active and responsible citizenship.
Physical Education:	Physical activity, cooperation, coordination.
Informal Curriculum:	Discover Primary Science.



1 Resources needed

- Trowels
- Forks
- Gloves
- Nettle
- Comfrey or seaweed liquid feed
- Watering cans.

2 Summer Care

The main jobs to carry out in summer are:

- Weeding.
- Watering (see 'Watering' support sheet).
- Liquid feeding.
- Pest control (see 'Insect hotels/Pests and Predators' support sheet).
- General maintenance and keeping the garden tidy.

3 Weeding

- Weeds are just plants in the wrong place. They are only a problem if they are taking nutrients or light from your fruit or vegetables.
- Common weeds include dock, nettles, fat hen, chickweed, dandelion, scutch grass, bindweed, brambles and redshank.
- Be careful not to disturb roots of vegetables when weeding.
- You can use a hoe to weed between rows – this is best done on a sunny day as it will kill the roots if you leave them lying on the bed.
- For hand weeding - use trowels or forks on smaller weeds.
- Dig under the roots and remove all of the root so it does not grow back.
- Use a mulch around vegetables to minimize weeding (see 'Vegetable beds in winter' support sheet for more details).
- Weeds will grow much faster in the summer months, try to weed little and often.
- Some weeds are edible so be selective in your weeding, eg. chickweed.
- Add weeds to the compost heap or wormery.



Weeding and summer care contd.

Health & Safety

Bend your knees, not your back when weeding. Always wash hands after a garden session. Please refer to the worksheet on Health & Safety for detailed information.

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Liquid Feeding

- Liquid feeding is the process of extracting nutrients and minerals from useful plants in the garden.
- The main plants used to make liquid feed are nettles, comfrey and dock.
- Nettles – high in nitrogen; are good for green growth, shoots and roots, and for green vegetables, such as cabbage, broccoli and spinach.
- Comfrey – high in potassium; good for flowering and fruiting plants such as tomatoes, pumpkins and courgettes.
- Dock – trace minerals and nutrients.
- Seaweed – trace minerals and nutrients, nitrogen, potassium.

To make liquid feed

- Use a large bucket or barrel and place near the vegetable patch, fill with water.
- Add leaves of nettle, comfrey and/or dock and strips of seaweed (if available).
- Leave to rot, it can be used after 3 days.
- Using a watering can, dilute feed to look like weak tea and water onto vegetables.
- Try to feed plants every couple of weeks.



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General maintenance

- Check plants for pests and disease regularly.
- Remove any dead or diseased plants or parts of plants (do not put in the compost heap).
- Keep the garden tidy.
- Ensure plants are properly supported – more supports may need to be added as the plants grow.
- Harvest vegetables as they become ripe – cook and eat when possible!

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Summer holidays

Plan watering and care of the beds over the summer holidays, try to involve parents, the caretaker and teachers (see 'Community Involvement' support sheet).

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Where to go for more information?

The Year Round Organic School Garden
(Living Publications) ISBN 978 0 9561301-0-5
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Ideas for Research projects

SESE – Investigate liquid feeds, research what nutrients plants need to grow and how they get them from the soil.

Local Heritage – What are weeds used for? Can any of them be used in medicine or cookery?

Art/Communications – make a display for the garden or green schools notice board of the summer care programme or liquid feeding.