

# Fruit Bushes and Rhubarb

## Time of Year

Fruit bushes in pots can be planted all year round. Rhubarb should be planted in November ideally.

## Cross Curriculum Relevance

SESE:	Living Things, Environmental Awareness and care, Exploring / research, web of life.
Visual Art:	Making signs / Planning fruit area / drawing map.
Literacy:	Labelling fruit bushes, new plant names.
Healthy Eating/Food Dude:	Harvesting and cooking / tasting fruit.



# 1

## Planting Fruit Bushes /Sceiche torthaí

- Make sure to go through tool safety before starting this project. Go through how to carry a spade and how to stand it when not in use (stand upright in ground or lean against a wall).
- Measure spacing for plants, roughly 1 to 2m apart, place pots where the plant is to go or mark with flour/bamboo.
- Dig holes, leaving soil beside the hole for putting back in after. Add a couple of scoops of compost; mix soil and compost in hole together.
- Check the depth of the hole by sitting the pot in the hole. The plant needs to be planted at the exact same depth of soil that it was in in the pot.
- Demonstrate how to take the plant out of the pot (clip roots only if absolutely necessary). Put the plant in the ground; put soil back in; firm soil around plants with feet.
- Mulch trees with 1m<sup>2</sup> of plastic (you can also use cardboard & grass clippings; comfrey leaves; seaweed; or compost), use spade to dig in edges of plastic; weigh down with mulch/grass cuttings etc.

# 2

## Planting Rhubarb/rúbarb

Rhubarb is a perennial fruit. It needs a specific area to grow (can grow in damp, shady spaces). Ask parents who grow rhubarb to divide their plants (November is the best time) and give some to the school or buy some in your local garden centre.

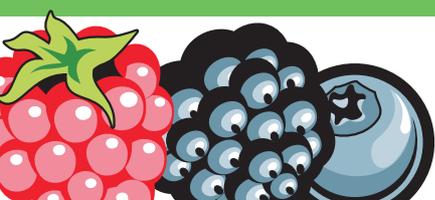
- Use sharp edge of spade to turn over the sod. Dig a deep hole; bigger, wider and deeper than the plant pot.
- Add lots of well-rotted manure or compost from your heap.
- Place the crown in, and fill back up with soil around the crown.
- Mulch with straw and cardboard.

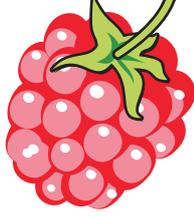
NB: DO NOT harvest any rhubarb from the plant in its first year of growth. They take a full year to settle in and become a strong plant!

# 3

## Examples of possible fruit bushes

Raspberries, Blackcurrant, Gooseberry, Red/White Currant, Myrtle Berry, Tayberries and Boysenberries.





# Fruit Bushes and Rhubarb contd.

## Health & Safety

Always use tools safely, wash hands after garden session.

# 4

### Where to go for more information?

The internet/the library  
[www.gardenorganic.org.uk](http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk)

Irish Seed Savers Association [www.irishseedsavers.ie](http://www.irishseedsavers.ie)

# 5

### Ideas for Research projects

**Maths** – get the children to estimate how much land is needed to grow a number of fruit bushes to produce a pot of jam.

**Geography** – What fruit bushes are grown in your local area and what are they used for?

Research Words: **MULCHING, PERENNIAL**

Research Project: **What is comfrey?**

**What is liquid feed and how do you make it?**

# 6

### To prune or not to prune?

This can always be confusing so the general rules are to prune out any branches that are:

- Dead
- Damaged
- Diseased
- Crossing over each other

## Make Rhubarb Crumble

### Ingredients:

700g rhubarb or mixed berries, 35-50g brown sugar, 50g sugar, 50g soft or melted butter.

### Crumble:

110g flour (alternative additions – oatmeal, granola) the equivalent mix of oatmeal, granola.

Clean and cut the rhubarb into slices. Wash berries. Stew gently with the sugar over a low temperature. Allow to cool and place in baking dish. Add the sugar to the flour and rub in the butter, until it resembles bread-crumbs. Cover the fruit with the crumble. Bake for 30-40 minutes until the topping is golden at 180 degrees or gas 6.

## How do we look after the plants?

- Check plants regularly.
- Water them if they need it.
- When they start producing flowers, start feeding with comfrey liquid feed.
  - Cover with netting to keep birds from eating all berries.
- Keep weed free through weeding and mulching.
  - Observe & record growth rates & seasonal changes.
  - Rhubarb likes lots of food – mulch with compost or manure every year.

## Rhubarb Fizz

### Ingredients:

1 kg rhubarb, 3 cups sugar, 6 teaspoons white vinegar  
 4 litres water, 2 lemons.

### Method:

Put rhubarb into small pieces; add to large bowl / container. Slice lemon in strips with rind on it. Add lemon slices and rest of ingredients to the rhubarb. Cover and leave for 48 hours stirring occasionally. Strain 3 times. Bottle and label. Leave for two weeks to mature.

