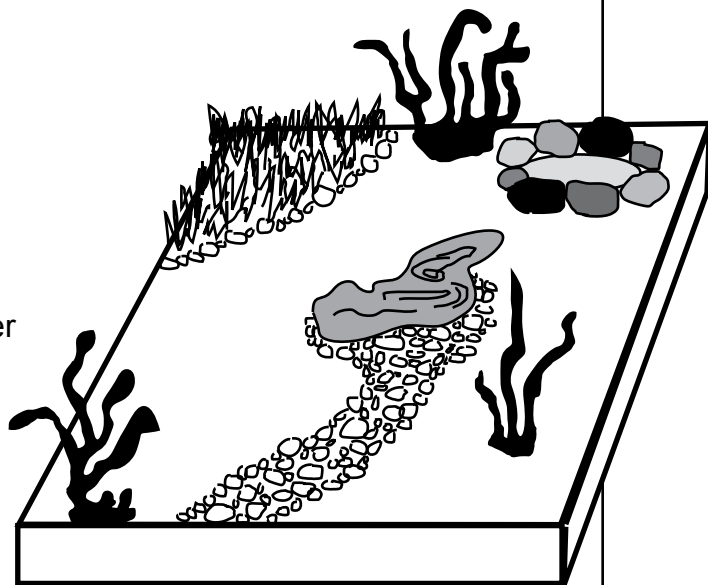


Miniature Gardens

An excellent exercise in creative design with a bit of a 'green' twist. If your children become interested in creating a garden on a miniature scale, they may just be encouraged to get involved in the real thing too!

You'll need:

- containers for the 'gardens' — things like large pot plant saucers, old dinner plates you no longer need, or old polystyrene trays (such as washed meat containers or empty takeaway trays)
- potting mix or good quality soil
- a selection of tiny plants
- small toys or figurines
- a range of small pebbles, stones, rocks, bits of wood and/or bark (anything decorative and ornamental really)
- small mirrors or pieces of silver foil (to use as 'ponds'). Perhaps a small saucer or lid covered in tin foil would also work and could then be filled with actual water.



Help your children to design a miniature garden world within their container. Fill the container with potting mix or soil to begin with (taking care to wash hands thoroughly afterwards as there have been recent health concerns associated with potting mix). Use the pebbles or stones to create miniature paths or walkways, perhaps with a decorative piece of wood at the end of it (like a miniature sculpture), add in a pond and then plant the miniature plants. Mosses are brilliant to use for 'grass'. You may wish to add small toys and characters to help bring this tiny world to life. The garden can be fed and watered, just like the real thing, and children can enjoy watching their plants grow and/or rearranging their tiny 'patch'. Small stones can be used to create borders and flower beds... in fact, anything small you can find will help to add colour and dimension to this tiny space.