

Design Sensory Gardens for Kids

Giving Them Time - Teaching Them Skills for Life

So what are sensory gardens and how do you design them? They are gardens that appeals to all the senses. **Smell, sight, taste, hearing and touch.**

Sensory gardens are great for all kids especially if you have a child with disabilities, like our daughter who has [autism](#). If you have a child with autism as we do, sensory gardens work very well.

You will be able to design a garden that **suits the needs** of your child, you may want to develop a particular sense, or have a garden that incorporates all the senses.

If you have a lot of space you could choose to use one area of the garden for a **sensory space**. You could also include a seating arrangement.

For small sensory gardens you can incorporate plants and accessories throughout the garden, or you could choose to use [container planting](#).

Taste Sense

An edible garden for kids **taste sense** can be as unique and individual as you like. Tailor it to suit your kids taste.

How about [herbs](#) to add to meals and to make drinks or simply just to take leaves and eat.

Do your kids like fruit? You could try growing wild strawberries and cherry tomatoes. Raspberries, blackcurrants and gooseberries are great for growing along your boundaries. As well as eating these fruits from the bush, they can be used for jams and other **recipes your kids** may enjoy.

Some vegetables are really quite easy to grow. We have tried courgettes, peas, runner beans, carrots and beets.

For something a **little more challenging** why not try growing monkey nuts.

If you have the space you may want to consider keeping chickens for the eggs. We had chickens who laid tasty **fresh eggs**. If you have young children you may want to consider keeping the chickens in a fenced off area as they can be quite messy as they poo everywhere.

Sound

Be creative with **sound**. There are wind chimes, you can buy these or make them with the kids.

Try to encourage **birds to your garden**. We have large hawthorn bushes which the birds love. The blackbirds have youngsters they are still feeding at the moment. they are flying from bush to bush cheeping to be fed.

Bird feeders are also great to encourage birds.

Then there are the plants. We love bamboo and have quite a few pots of it as a hedge. We also have a Nanus Variegatus which has bamboo like foliage, it rustles in the wind. Sweetcorn also rustles. All grasses are great the wind makes them rustle.

Groundcover can also be great for sound. Small pebbles and stones make a crunching sound when you walk. Twigs make a cracking sound when walked on.

Smell sense

- Smells, there are so many **varieties of plants** to choose from for smells. Here are a few choices
 - Jasmine is a climber plant which flowers mid summer.
 - **Chocolate cosmos** gives off a gorgeous chocolate smell.
 - **Orange** geraniums smell of orange
 - **Nutmeg** geraniums of cookies
 - Sweet violets
 - Anise hyssop smells of liquorice.
 - curry plant
 - **Pineapple Broom** a shrub with pineapple scented flowers.
 - The **honey bush** gives off the smell of peanuts when you rub the foliage.
- And then there are **herbs** some of which need to be rubbed to give off their smell.
 - **All mints**(chocolate, apple, chocolate peppermint, orange, pineapple)
 - Lavender and Rosemary
 - The sages

Touch Sense

- So what can you provide for a **touchy feely** area.
 - A **sandpit and water** play area are great
 - **Pebbles** are good for playing with.
 - **For planting** why not try:
 - Lambs foot(fuzzy)
 - Rabbits Foot Grass(soft)
 - Fountain Grass(grass heads feel like **hairy caterpillars**)
 - Baby sunflowers (soft and fluffy)
 - Fennel(it's aromatic and has feathery leaves)
 - Hare's Tail (furry)
 - Prickly Bull Thistle (very prickly leaves)
 - African Sundew (**meat eating plant**, catches prey by sticky leaves)
 - Silver Sage(soft and fuzzy)
 - Ornamental grasses
 - Asparagus (soft ferns)
 - **Herbs** are great as you need to rub them to release their scent.
 - A **lawn** is great for lying on and sitting on
 - **Pebbles**
- for walking on(they are nice and cool in hot weather, great for walking on barefoot in hot weather)

Sight

- This incorporates **color, movement, shadows and shape.**
 - colorful mosaic paving
 - **Wind spirals**
 - **Sunlight** through ornamental grasses and ferns
 - **For planting:**
 - Corn marigold(bright yellow flowers)
 - Cardoon (thistle like flowers; reaches 5ft high)
 - Giant Fennel(reaches 10ft feathery leaves, yellow flowers)
 - sunflowers
 - Swiss chard(can be eaten)
 - Marigolds
 - **Plants to encourage butterflies:**
 - Buddleia
 - Sedum
 - Rosemary
 - Thyme
 - Honeysuckle
 - Lavender
 - Cornflowers
 - Lobelia
 - Primrose
 - Lilac
 - Chameleon plant