

# Garden Fun

“A garden is a friend you can visit anytime.”  
—Anonymous

Gardening is a wonderful way to connect with nature and your community. Whether planting a large outdoor garden or a small indoor windowsill garden, you are enriching your world to make it a better place.

Did you know that Girl Scouts have been gardening throughout our history? Girl Scouts founder Juliette Gordon Low valued the outdoors and loved playing in her garden as a child. Girl Scouts have earned gardening badges since 1918 and have assisted their community when needed. During World War I, Girl Scouts grew victory gardens to help provide food for those less fortunate. During World War II, Girl Scouts once again stepped in to help the war effort on the homefront.

Gardening connects us to nature and allows us to follow the Girl Scout Promise and Law to use resources wisely. Growing gardens not only adds beauty but can be helpful to wildlife.

How to earn the Garden Fun patch the Girl Scout way:

## Steps:

1. **Discover**—Learn how specific plants can be beneficial to your environment.
2. **Connect**—Plant a garden that will help your community.
3. **Take Action**—Share your gardening knowledge.

## Materials Needed:

In order to complete this patch, you'll need a few things:

- resources (You can either go online with an adult, ask a professional, or visit your public library.)
- gardening supplies based on your selected activity (See Step 2.)
- notebook/pens to create a gardening resource booklet

## Step 1

### Learn more about gardens.

Gardens are an important part of your environment. Learn how beneficial different kinds of plants can be. You can either go online with an adult, talk to an expert, or visit your local library and learn more about the following topics.

1. A native plant is one that occurs naturally in a particular region, ecosystem, or habitat. What plants are native to Pennsylvania? How are invasive plants impacting native plants?
2. Most flowering plants depend on bees, butterflies, and other animals for pollination. What can you do to help increase helpful pollinators in a garden?



## Step 2

# Grow your garden.

Gardens help people and wildlife in many ways: food, habitat, pollinators, etc. Think about how you would like your garden to help and then dig in! Be prepared by making a plan—thinking about the questions below will help you bloom!

### Where will you grow your garden?

- Perhaps a backyard, windowsill, or larger outdoor space.

### What type of plants would you like to grow?

- Fruit, veggies, herbs, trees, flowers, or a combination?
- Explore the soil, weather, and sunlight at your garden location to choose plants that are most likely to thrive. Remember, not everything will thrive every season. Gardening always has some “duds” and it’s not a bad thing, just try again next time! Even a plant that didn’t quite grow as you planned still returns amazing nutrients to the soil and helps the ecosystem!

### What tools and materials do you need before you begin planting?

- Consider family, friends, or fellow Girl Scouts who might want to help or have tools to share.

### How will the garden be maintained?

- Consider who will be available to maintain (and harvest) your garden. How much time and what additional resources might you need?

**Fun Fact:** One of the most important ways you can help all wildlife and plants is by growing things that provide pollen and nectar for pollinators (like bees and butterflies). They help plants and wildlife in so many ways! To attract butterflies, you will also need to include a variety of larval host plants for caterpillars to eat. Learn more: <https://extension.psu.edu/planting-pollinator-friendly-gardens>

## Step 3

# Share your knowledge and experience.

After learning about beneficial plants and planting your own garden, connect with your community and share what you’ve learned. Chose at least one of the following activities:

- Create a gardening resource booklet to share with others. You can include information about Pennsylvania native plants, the importance of pollinators, tips for planting in your region, or any other useful information you learned along the way. Share your booklet with a community group!
- Gardens are a wonderful place for people to get food and herbs and even just enjoy the outdoors. Find a local garden that would benefit from some volunteer time. Work with the facility management to find out what you can do to help improve and maintain the existing plants and structures.
- Contact the local forestry service to find out what you can do to help with the removal of invasive plants. Plan a day to spend at a local, state, or national park to eliminate invasive species from the native plants. Share your experience locally to encourage others to help in the effort to keep invasive species from spreading.

## All done? CONGRATULATIONS!

You’ve completed all the necessary steps to earn the Garden Fun patch.



After completing the activities from each step, visit or call a Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania retail shop at 800-248-3355 to purchase your patch.\* A patch may be worn on the back of a vest, sash or tunic.

\*Patch shown may be substituted with similar patch, based on availability.