

HERB GARDENING

Information Booklet



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The first time I planted seeds,
I didn't like gardening, but it grew on me!





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wâpanêwask



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WELCOME GARDENERS!

We hope this gardening resource will introduce you to planting, nurturing, and harvesting herbs. Gardening has many health benefits that you may experience on your gardening journey. We hope you enjoy all that herb planting has to offer, whatever the outcome may be!

This booklet explains how to grow and harvest yarrow, mint, and sage in your home. In the past, Métis people used these plants as food and medicine, and many Métis people still use them today.



DID YOU KNOW?

- Gardening can reduce stress and anxiety.
- Gardening brings joy and builds self-esteem.
- Gardening can provide physical activity which can improve strength and heart health.
- Gardening outdoors increases vitamin D and calcium levels which benefits your bones and immune system (just don't forget to apply sunscreen!)
- Gardening with someone you love helps build positive connections.
- Gardening helps nurture your connection to the earth and living things.
- Gardening lets you grow healthy food free of additives, giving you ownership of your own well being.



PLEASE NOTE:

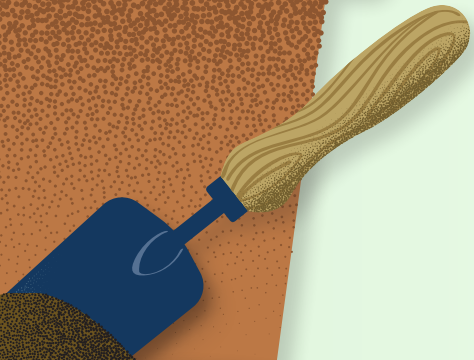
Not all plants are safe to touch or eat. Stay safe, be aware of your surroundings, and always search for plants with a trusted adult. For more information on safe plant use and harvesting practices, consider talking to a Métis Knowledge Keeper that knows more about plants.

YARROW

Wâpanêwask



Life's a garden, dig it!



WHAT IS IT?

Yarrow is a fragrant herb that grows from about ten to eighty centimeters tall- which is about the height of a chihuahua to about the height of a wolf! Yarrow has little white flowers and leaves that look similar to ferns. If it is planted in the right area, Yarrow will continue to grow back every year.

WHERE IS IT FOUND?

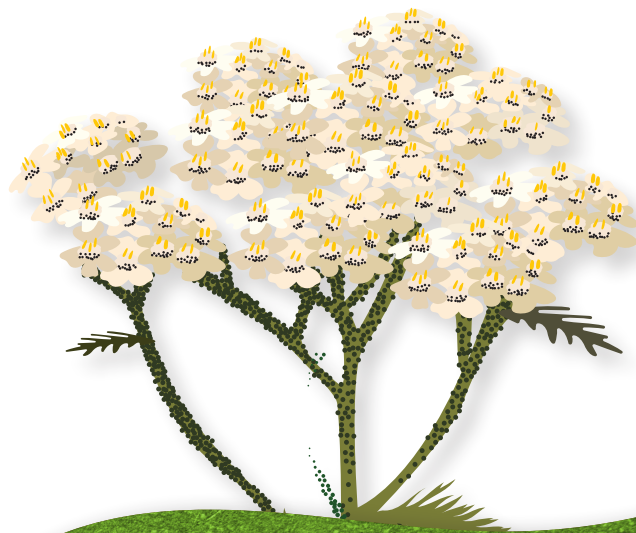
Yarrow can be found near wet and dry areas throughout the province of Alberta, such as roadsides, meadows, and fields.

HARVESTING

The best time to harvest yarrow flowers is on a bright summer day when the flowers are in full bloom. The leaves can be harvested throughout the year but are at their best in spring and early summer. To harvest yarrow, cut the top of the plant off right above a leaf to help new leaves and flowers to form. You can also gently pinch off a few leaves or flower heads from the stems to use as needed.

HOW IT'S USED

- Tea made from yarrow flowers and leaves can help in the treatment of colds and influenza, indigestion, and nausea.
- Yarrow has also been used in many Métis communities to treat wounds and stop bleeding.



FUN FACTS!

Yarrow is one of the most widely used medicinal plants in the world and is used by many Indigenous peoples across Canada.

Yarrow can be cut and dried to use in decorative dried flower artwork. Yarrow flowers dry easily and they look beautiful in art and crafts!

Gardening can provide physical activity, which can improve strength and heart health.

MINT

Amiskose wehkuskwa



* You can do it!
* Sending some encourage-mint!

WHAT IS IT?

Wild Mint can grow up to ninety centimeters tall, which is about as tall as a white-tailed deer! It smells strongly of mint and has a distinct four-sided stem with sharp-toothed leaves. The flowers are very light purple or pink, and bloom July through September. Wild mint will continue to grow every year if it is planted in the right spot.

WHERE IS IT FOUND?

Wild mint grows in wet plains and foothills throughout Alberta. It can be found near wet meadows, springs, streambanks, and ponds. Many people say that “you will smell it before you see it!”

HARVESTING

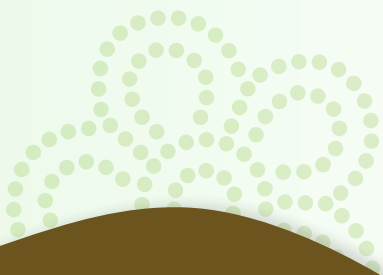
Mint can be harvested often, as it will grow new leaves all year long. Trim stems above the first or second set of leaves by cutting them near the bottom of the stem and new growth will appear.

HOW IT'S USED

- Mint tea can be made to help treat a cough, cold, stomach upset, and fever, and to cleanse and strengthen the whole body.
- Some people believe that mint tea supports good mental health since it can help to relax your mind and body.

FUN FACTS!

Be careful where you plant your mint!
When planted in the ground, Wild
Mint can grow uncontrollably and can
take over your whole garden!
One way to avoid this is by planting
mint in a pot so it doesn't spread.



SAGE

Wehkaskwa



All you seed is love!



WHAT IS IT?

Sage is a fragrant plant with greenish-gray leaves that grows to about sixty centimeters tall, which is about the height of a Lynx! Wild prairie sage has small, yellow-white flowers that bloom from June to October. Garden sage flowers can be purple, blue, or red, and bloom late in the summer.



WHERE IS IT FOUND?

Sage is found all over North America in dry areas like plains, hills, rocky slopes, and forest openings.



HARVESTING

To harvest garden sage, gently pinch off the leaves or snip small branches from the plant. Usually, sage can be harvested up to three times in one season.



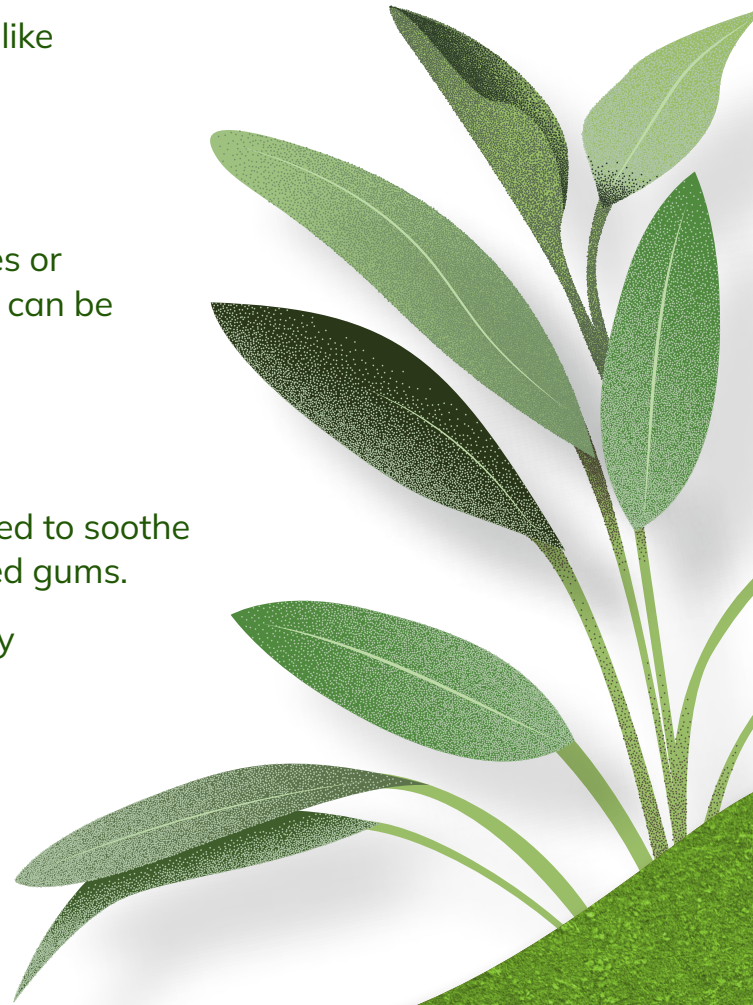
HOW IT'S USED

- Tea made with fresh or dried sage can be used to soothe throat infections, dental abscesses, or infected gums.
- It can also be used in cooking to flavour many types of dishes.

FUN FACTS!

Some Métis people called wild sage “the holy plant”, or “l’herbe du saint” because of its use on Palm Sunday or Dimanche des Rameaux. Priests would bless the sage and give it to people to use in place of palm fronds.

Gardening lets you grow healthy food that is free of additives, giving you ownership of your own well-being.



PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS

1. PREPARE THE SOIL

Each plant is unique and has different soil preferences. As a general rule of thumb, most plants prefer well-draining soil that is not over-saturated in water. Be sure to research the soil preferences of your specific plant before planting!



2. PLANT THE SEEDS

Most seeds prefer to be planted $\frac{1}{4}$ inch deep in the soil, but some prefer to be planted closer to the top. After you have planted your seeds, gently pack the soil down. Place each pot on a plate or tupperware lid so you don't end up with a puddle when you water it!



3. WATER

Water each plant after planting the seeds using a spray bottle or a watering can, then lightly water your plants on the days the soil on top is dry- this might be every few days.



4



4. MONITOR

As your plants grow, be on the lookout for signs of over or under watering. If you give your plant too much water, its leaves may look dark, droopy, or mushy.

If you don't give your plant enough water, leaves may look brittle or flakey and the soil will be very dry.

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5. TRANSPLANT

As your plants grow, they will begin to outgrow their pots and will need to be transplanted to a bigger space. A plant can be transplanted when it is more than 2X the size of the pot, or when you can see the roots poking through the holes at the bottom of the pot.



We be-leaf in you!

Gardening brings joy and
builds self esteem.

PLANTING TUTORIAL VIDEO

Scan the QR code below to watch a video tutorial featuring Sparrow, her family, and Sarah from the Early Years Team on Riverlot 11 in the Edmonton River Valley showing you how to plant your seeds!



Gardening with someone
you love helps build positive
connections.



TIPS & TRICKS

1. CHOOSE THE RIGHT LOCATION

Herbs grow best in a sunny location with well-draining soil. Place your herbs near a sunny window!



2. WATER OFTEN, BUT NOT TOO MUCH

A good way to check if your plant needs watering is to poke your finger $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 inch into the soil. If the soil is dry, add just enough water to soak the soil.



We're rooting for you!

Gardening outdoors increases vitamin D and calcium levels which benefits your bones and immune system. Just don't forget to apply sunscreen!

HARVESTING PRACTICES



When you are harvesting, only take what you need.



Be very gentle with the plants, and treat them with care to show respect for nature and the Earth.



Break, cut, or pinch the leaves, flowers, and stems gently instead of pulling them out by their roots.



Thank the plants for the gifts they give us.



If you are harvesting plants from the wild, make sure you know what the plant is before harvesting. Not all plants can be touched and eaten, so always ask a trusted adult before touching any plant.



Be sure you are picking in a safe area.



As you hike into your plant-harvesting spot, be careful of where you are walking and try not to step on healthy plants.

Charlotte B. harvesting sage in Saskatchewan



Sage bundle



Become an MNA-Approved Harvester!

If you are a citizen of the Métis Nation of Alberta and have an ancestral connection to one or more of the defined harvesting areas in Alberta, you can apply for a harvesting card that identifies you as an MNA-approved harvester!



If you have questions about Métis harvesting rights in Alberta, or how to apply for a harvesting card, you can connect with the MNA Harvesting Team at harvesting@metis.org or scan the QR code for more information.



Gardening helps nurture your connection to the earth and living things.

DRYING AND STORING HERBS

Many Métis people are experts at preserving and storing foods and medicines to make sure they have enough to last through the long winter months.

If you would like to preserve your own herbs, you can do the following:

1. Cut off the stems and tie them together in bundles with a string or rubber band.
2. Wash and dry the herbs.
3. Hang the bundles upside down in paper bags to dry and to keep them free of dust.
4. Once your herbs are dry, store them in an airtight container in a cool, dark, and dry place.
5. If you are drying and storing more than one herb, make sure to label your containers as some herbs can look alike.



A wild mint bundle hanging upside down on a wall to dry.



Dried mint on a tray, with some in a jar for storage.



Li boum tea preparation

TEA RECIPE

Li boum (wild mint)

“ Li boum was a big part of our family for as long as I can remember. It was used to soothe sore throats, congestion, and upset stomachs. The smell of li boum tea reminds me of my community, specifically my parent’s home. Today, I love sharing a pot of li boum with my grandchildren while I tell them old family stories.

– Carol Carifelle-Brzezicki

INGREDIENTS:

- About 10-20 dried li boum (wild mint) leaves
- One black tea bag (e.g. Red Rose)
- Honey (to taste)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Harvest li boum through the summer months.
2. Wash fresh li boum, and hang it upside down in a paper bag (to protect from dust).
3. Let the li boum dry for at least 2 weeks.
4. Store the dried li boum in a sealed jar or a paper bag until use.
5. Add 2 cups of boiled hot water to a cup with one tea bag and approximately 10-20 dried li boum leaves.
6. Let the tea steep for 2-5 minutes.
7. Add honey to your desired sweetness.
8. Enjoy!



Carol Carifelle-Brzezicki



Tania Kruk, East Prairie Métis Settlement, AB

THANK YOU!



We would like to extend our most sincere gratitude
≡ **TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED** ≡
make the Herb Gardening
Natoona Michif Pimatisiwin a success!

We thank our Métis Knowledge Holders, specifically **SkyBlue Morin**, for their contributions to the content and language translations.

We thank community member **Carol Carifelle-Brzezicki** for sharing her stories and her family's wild mint (li boum) tea recipe.

We thank **Kuhlmann's Greenhouse Garden Market** for the knowledge they freely shared with us.

We thank **Métis Nation of Alberta's Harvesting Department** and **Environment and Climate Change Department** for sharing information and support for this project.

We thank **the sources and authors** that guided this booklet's content for their research, knowledge, and commitment to sharing important cultural information with future generations of Métis families.

And finally, we thank **our citizens and their families** who trusted us with providing them quality and thoughtful gardening information in a meaningful way.



MICHIF GLOSSARY

MICHIF

SOURCE

ENGLISH

Natoona Michif Pimatisiwin

Community Knowledge Holder

exploring Métis culture

wâpanêwask

Northern Michif as translated by SkyBlue Morin

yarrow

li boum

Community Knowledge Holder

wild mint

**amiskose
wehkuskwa**

Northern Michif as translated by SkyBlue Morin

mint

wehkaskwa

Northern Michif as translated by SkyBlue Morin

sage

Download the
Northern Michif To Go app

To learn more

NORTHERN MICHIF
words!

PLAY STORE

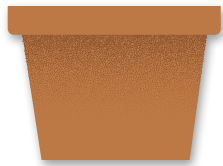


APP STORE

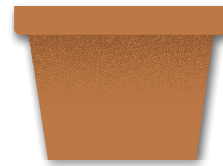


OBSERVATION JOURNAL

Draw your plant's progress over the next few weeks!



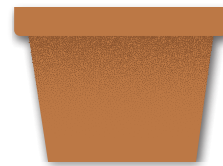
WEEK 1



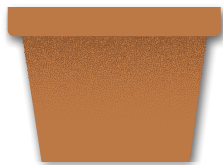
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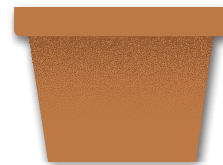
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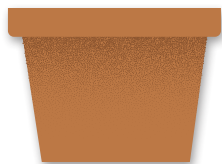
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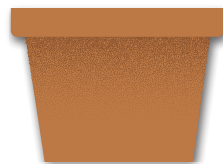
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WEEK 6



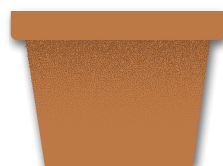
WEEK 7



WEEK 8



WEEK 9



WEEK 10



WEEK 11



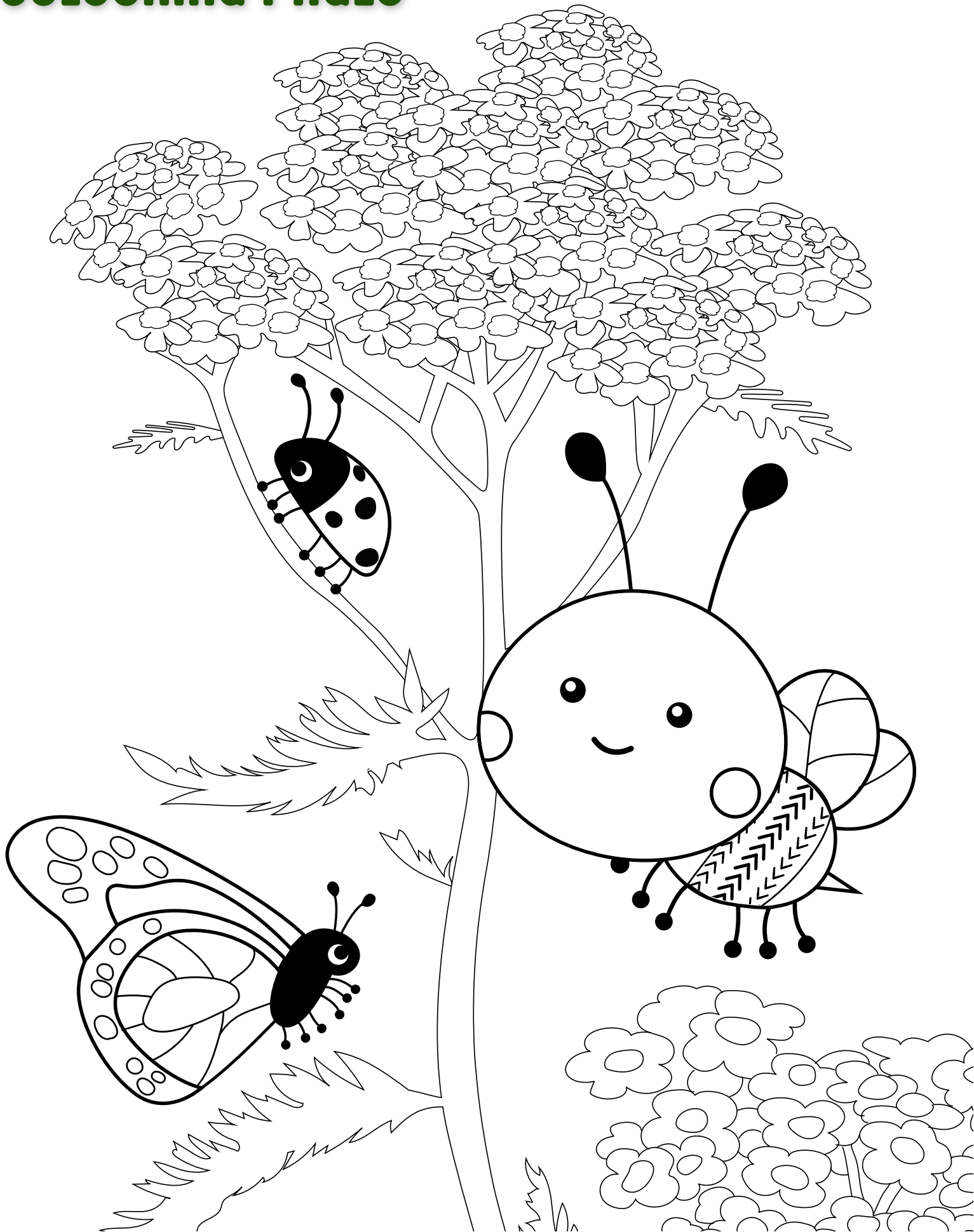
WEEK 12

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF PLANTING THE SEEDS?

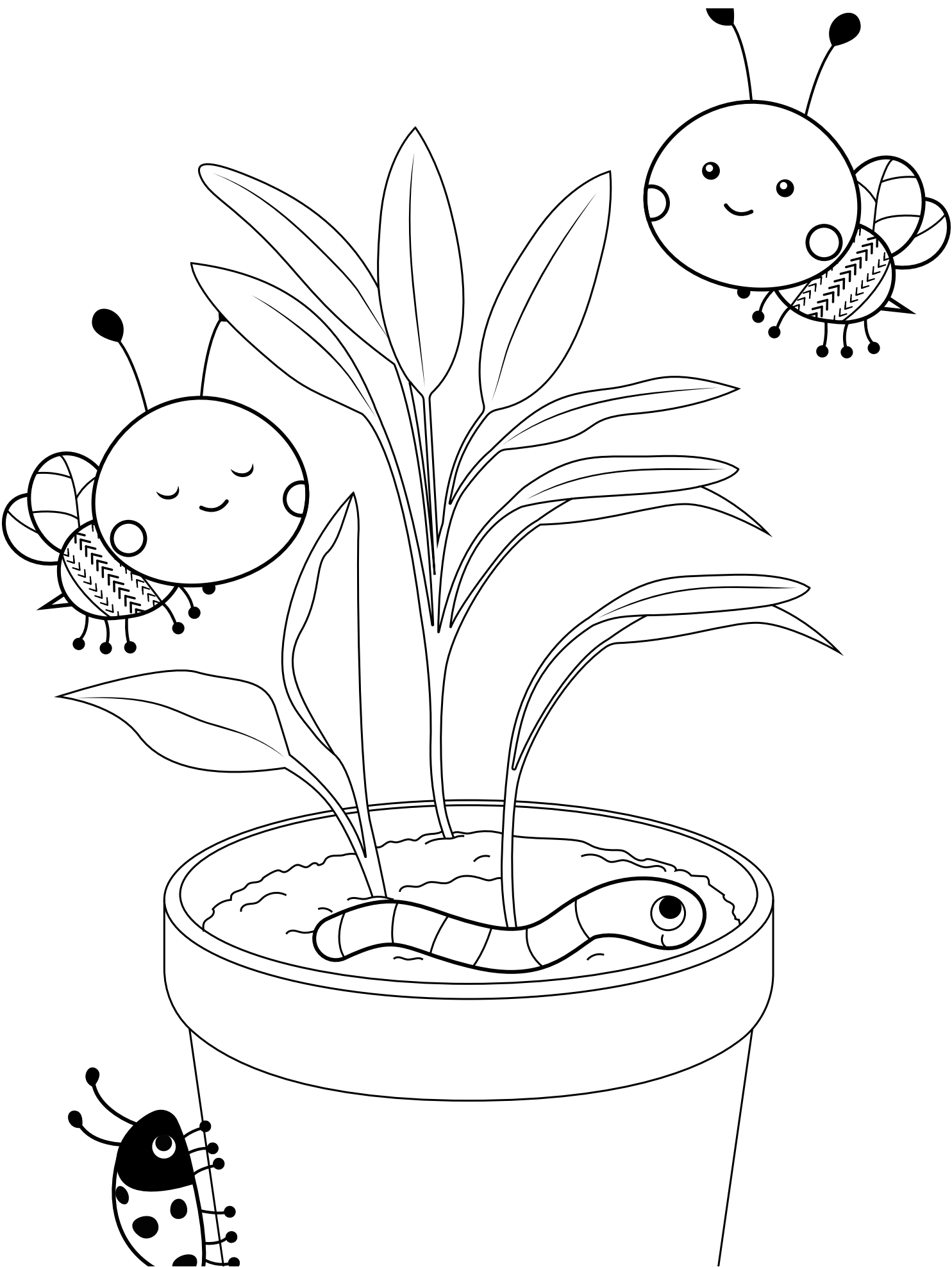
Share your thoughts with your family.

Write down or draw what you talked about below.

COLOURING PAGES













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Otipemisiwak Métis Government ∞ Children and Family Services Department
11738 Kingsway NW, Edmonton, AB, T5G 0X5
(780) 455-2200 ∞ www.albertametis.com

