

Spring 'Magic' in the Garden

First Grade St. Patrick's Day Lesson

45 min

Objective: Students will explore 'magic' in the garden by planting seeds with magical properties (based on fairytales from previous ELA unit).

Materials:

sugar snaps pea seeds (good to soak 24 hours or night before)
(frozen/fresh/canned peas to taste)
3 different pea trellises/structures pre-constructed
examples of climbing plants (English Ivy, pre-grown bean and pea plant etc)
bean seeds – any variety on hand (OR shamrock seeds in magic pots!)
radish seeds
seed starting soil (pre-moistened), cups, sharpie pen
tiny toy fairy dolls (or other items) to hide in advance in one area of garden

5 min whole class Intro: What season is it? Spring is a magical time of year – Why? when leprechauns and fairies come out in the garden! Elicit background knowledge from students, brief overview of what we'll explore and do in garden visit today. Mention 'Gnomad the nomadic Gnome' who now lives/hides in garden!

3 Groups

Bean Group: 15 min

Plant *Jack & Beanstalk* magic beans in cups for students to grow on class windowsills or take home. 3 seeds per cup. How deep to plant? Discussion: how tall will they grow? (if planting climbing yard long beans show students how long beans will grow using measuring stick 1 yard = 36 in). What would you want to find at top of magic beanstalk? What did Jack find? Would you climb up to find out? What can you do once your bean sprouts and wants to climb? (needs a tellis/stick etc.)

--Brainstorm other fairytales students recall with plants in the story:

1. *Rapunzel* – her other craved this type of lettuce (Rapunzel plant)
2. *Princess and Pea* – how could a princess possibly feel a pea under mattresses?
3. *Snow White* – evil Queen gave her a poison apple to eat – why not another fruit?

What role does each plant play in the story? Could the story be the same without that particular plant? Could the story still work using a different plant? If yes, which plant would you substitute? Rapunzel lettuce: crave = really want to eat. What is your favorite vegetable to eat?! What other seed might be small and hard and round enough to be felt through a mattress?

Pea/Radish Group: 15 min

How many of you like to eat peas? Try one first! Taste before you plant! While students taste... It's tradition people plant peas around St. Patrick's Day! Why? Ground not frozen, spring arriving (March 20th) so warmer days/more sun etc. (review what seeds need **to germinate** (sprout/begin to grow): air (oxygen),

water, right temperature warm or cold (some seeds need light or dark). All needed to break open the seed coat. Then once it germinates plant will need **nutrients** (from soil), water, sunlight (energy) to grow. Explain why it helps to soak pea seeds night before to speed up germination etc.)

Point out 3 different trellis structures (tee pee, branches, recycled fencing etc.) Why are we planting peas around these structures? How do peas climb? By grabbing hold with little fingers called **tendrils** (show picture on seed packet if available). How do YOU climb? (using arms/legs/hands etc). Discuss how other plants 'climb' such as beans which wrap or twine around, and plants that suction/stick to walls or tree trunks (like English Ivy). Bring examples if possible for students to touch.

Now plant pea seeds – where? Close to structures! How deep? Place peas on surface soil and kids push down with fingers etc.

*time permitting plant **radish** seeds – good **companion plants** for peas! (explain gardeners grow certain plants together because they are 'friends' and grow well next to each other etc.). Students can predict/guess whether radish seeds are bigger or smaller than pea seeds. Do radishes climb? No! What part of radish do we eat? (root!). Make long furrow in bed; students sprinkle in seeds, cover and tamp down soil. Label rows – why? So we know what we planted where in the garden!

Fairies & Shamrocks: 15 min

Students listen as teacher/garden parent reads following (or more!) poems:

The Fairies by Rose Fyleman

I found a Four Leaf Clover by Jack Prelutsky

Prompt Discussion:

Do you think there are fairies living in the school garden? Leprechauns? Should you touch a fairy you find or would it lose its magic?? Have you ever found a 4 leaf clover? What do 4 leaves represent? Faith, Hope, Luck, Love

**Long ago (in Middle Ages) children believed they could see/find fairies if they carried a 4 leaf clover in their pocket but if they found a 5 leaf clover they believed it would bring them bad luck.

Students search for 4 leaf clovers (grassy patch under Magnolia tree!) and look for tiny fairies (previously hidden in same area). They may each pick a clover but may not touch the magic fairies/move these.

(**time permitting also read The Little Elf by John Kendrick Bangs and I'd Love to Be a Fairy's Child by Robert Graves)

Resources:

Ways plants climb: <http://www.sunset.com/garden/garden-basics/how-vines-climb>

Germination: <https://extension.illinois.edu/gpe/case3/c3facts3.html>

All poems can be found in these 2 books:

Poems to Learn By Heart edited by Caroline Kennedy

Kids Pick the Funniest Poems edited by Bruce Lansky