



**Learning through gardening –
A resource pack for adult literacy tutors**



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Acknowledgements



Learning through gardening resource pack

Having access to useful resources is essential for any tutor who cares about the quality of their delivery to learners. This Learning through Gardening Course Resource Pack is a course developed with Adult Literacy and Basic Education tutors in mind and is aimed at tutors who work with learners who require significant support and direction.

The Learning through Gardening Course was developed by National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) and Kerry Education and Training Board (Ireland) in 2010 as an unaccredited, integrated course to help learners develop literacy, numeracy and technology skills through gardening. There are 4 modules in the course:

1. Maths
2. Communications
3. Digital Literacy
4. Horticulture

Mapping to the ACSF

Adult Learning Australia has taken these resources and mapped them to the [Australian Core Skills Framework](#) (ACSF).

This Learning through Gardening Resource Pack will help learners understand and learn new skills and knowledge under supervision.

NALA has tried to make the resource clear, relevant and practical. It provides tutors with many tools to work with learners to develop skills in writing, numeracy, horticulture and digital literacy. There are 'Tutor Tips' with each module referencing further materials, resources and websites that have been used and found helpful.

This Learning through Gardening Resource Pack clearly illustrates how literacy tuition can be delivered in a fun, creative manner and can be centred on the interests of the learners.

Adult Learning Australia would like to acknowledge NALA for generously sharing this wonderful resource.



Introduction

This program has been designed for use with groups and for tutors with or without horticultural experience.

The acquisition of a polytunnel is highly desirable as it takes away some of the vagaries of the climate, but it's not essential – radishes can be grown on a classroom windowsill, and walks can be taken in a local park or garden centre but a garden, however small is helpful.

If the centre has a polytunnel or a garden it is important that there is a gardener or caretaker who is interested and even volunteers who can help the learners when the tutors are not present, especially during the summer holidays.

The importance of documenting learners' activities photographically at these levels cannot be overstated. Photographs rekindle memory, spark creative ideas and give the learner a sense of pride in their work. Learners should take lots of photographs of their work in the garden; make collages from the various projects and display these on the notice board.

Working with the seasons

The tutors can decide how and when to use the resource pack, but they will be dictated to by the seasons – it's better to concentrate on planning the garden and health and safety in the winter, and seed sowing in the spring.

We have made the worksheets with adaptation in mind. Tutors are encouraged to amend worksheets to suit particular learner groups' needs – particularly for Cloze exercises and number work, as no two learners are the same.

The tutors will see that the worksheets may be used to achieve learning outcomes for more than one module. The garden diary worksheet is an example of this and may be used within all four modules. When working the garden, it is really important to keep a record of everything you plant and where, so that you know which plant is which. The garden diary will help learners to do this and they should be encouraged to keep a regular diary of the work they've done in the garden through the year. Perhaps the use of sequenced photographs could be included to demonstrate what was achieved in the garden. Visual representation is useful for learners as it allows them to verbally reconstruct their activity, which can then be recorded.

It is essential to set up a weekly communication (email for example) between tutors teaching the various modules of this program. We have found the use of lesson plans and summary reports (see Appendices for examples of both) gives each tutor a comprehensive overview of how the learners are progressing through the program.

Resources required

Tutors will need the following resources:

- At least one digital camera (but preferably more, so learners have a chance to use them).
- The use of a computer for all learners and a shared printer.
- A simple thermometer is required for the temperature readings and a rain gauge provides more maths opportunities.
- Gardening equipment relevant to program level.

Consideration needs to be given as to how these worksheets will be filed in various centres. We have found that the use of plastic folders with dividers and poly-pockets works well.

Suggested software:

- Word processing software such as Microsoft Word
- Paint (simple graphics application; useful for practising mouse skills)
- Presentation software which combines combining images, photos, music and narration, for example Microsoft PowerPoint

Abbreviations

LG – Learning through gardening

IT – information technology

WS – worksheet