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baby lewis in the herb garden

Posted in All posts on 13th June 2013

He's growing like a weed, and sometimes as sulky as my squash plants in this mild weather. Yes, my lovely son Lewis is now four months old.



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I've been wondering recently what age he'd have to be before I started trying to indoctrinate him into vegetable growing. He happily rolls around on the lawn in the sunshine, and it is easy to forget he's still only 16 weeks. We're probably two months from weaning, so I can't even feed him any of my garden produce yet. However, I've been trying a couple of ways to get him comfortable outside and interested in the veg patch. I figure the more time he spends in and around the garden, the more likely he is to want to be out there messing around rather than watching tele when he's older. (I'm a first time parent, please humour my naivety!)

With the herb garden in full flow, we've been hovering Lewis over the plants to see what he thinks. To our surprise and delight, he seems very keen on this. Lewis pulls, pushes and rips at the leaves which in turn release scent and sometimes we can even hear him sniffing. Favourites appear to be lemon balm, spearmint and the bay tree. Held up in front of the tree, Lewis will wriggle and pull towards the leaves, and become quite grumpy if you don't let him go that way. He seems to enjoy tugging at the leaves and the rustling sound they make. It struck me that the herb patch isn't too dissimilar to some of the baby toys that we have bought. The herbs are colourful and have different textures when touched. They don't make the buzzes and whistles that the toys do, but then the plants have varying scents to occupy Lewis instead.

This is a great reminder how interactive a herb patch is for kids and adults alike. The plants are very colourful, smell great and of course add flavours to cooking. What's more, they're easy to maintain and many herbs are perennials, so will come back year after year with no fuss. Plants establish fast and most can be grown from cuttings and rootings, so a herb garden is cheap and fast to put together too. Maybe the best thing about this new found love for my herb patch is that a whiney, bored boy suddenly becomes pacified when he gets stuck into the plants. I suppose this is to be expected with such a lot to stimulate the senses, but even so, it's nice

knowing if all else fails we've got the herb garden to fall back on.

With Lewis a few weeks from weening, I'm liking the idea that he is becoming used to the smell of culinary herbs before beginning to eat proper food, and I can't help think of the future. Watching my little boy ripping leaves from their stems has already led to me putting in my veg patch defences: the front is now lined with spiky gooseberry bushes – he'll only run through them once!

Read Sarah's guide on gardening with Children, and how she let her daughter Molly [take over a plot at Perch Hill...](#)

Thanks for reading!



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