

WEED RACES



Weeding the garden is a never-ending spring, summer, and fall garden job. Weed races make this garden chore a fun learning activity for the entire class.

- **Procedure:**

Explain what a WEED is. Webster defines a weed as: a wild plant growing in cultivated land and injurious to the planted crops.

Role play this definition with the class. Have one child play the role of a plant growing in the garden (tomato, carrot, lettuce, swiss chard, corn, or whatever is growing in the garden during your visit). You will play the role of the weed. Pretend to put your hands around the child's neck to demonstrate that you (the weed) are "choking" the plant--taking away its food and water.

- Divide students into teams of two, three, or four. Have each team decide on a team name. Give each team a black bucket with a string handle. (These are hanging on the garden fence near the benches.)
- A Farmer will take each team to an area of the garden that needs to be weeded. There the Farmer will demonstrate WHAT weeds need to be pulled and HOW to pull them.
Weeds that frequently appear in our garden are:

chicory
mallow
pigweed
dandelions

curly dock
smartweed
lambquarters
sow thistle

prickly lettuce
wild mustard
ironweed
purslane

You may want to take samples back to class to make a chart of weeds that you found. Weeding is an excellent real-life visual discrimination activity--weed vs. garden plant.

Weeds need to be pulled so that roots come out of the soil to keep the weeds from continuing to grow. The child puts their hand around the base of one plant at the soil level to pull roots, stem, and leaves. The child hits the weeds against the side of the bucket to knock any dirt off the roots.

- The weeds are placed in the bucket and can be mashed down for maximum capacity. When the bucket is full, the team brings the bucket to the WEIGHING STATION located at the garden benches. An adult needs to be stationed there.

