

Sensuous plants to draw children outdoors!

Bob writes, "We're **planting** parts of a city park in Westmont, Illinois **to interest children**. I am hoping you can provide me with plant suggestions that can be used for **therapeutic purposes** or for interesting, yet safe, textures. **Touchable plants**. I could use both sun and shade suggestions. I appreciate the assistance."

Here are some that my kids and their friends enjoyed, Bob. Most will do best if you route traffic around them or otherwise **delay the poking and prodding until they become established**. Many will last longer when planted between flagstones or in rock walls so their roots are not damaged by the foot traffic sure to follow the fingers.

Those with asterisks are the ones I consider toughest have asterisks -- they're most able to stand up to frequent petting. Even those may need occasional replacement due to wear but that seems a small price to pay to draw kids outdoors and into nature.

When my readers send me other ideas, I'll compile them and post another set.

Kids Love em:	Touchably soft	Intriguing scent	Engages the curious
<b>Sun, perennials:</b>			
*Curly chives ( <i>Allium senescens glaucum</i> )			x
*Fennel ( <i>Foeniculum</i> varieties)	x		
Kind Edward yarrow ( <i>Achillea tomentosa</i> )	x		
*Lambs ear ( <i>Stachys lanata</i> )	x		
*Lemon balm ( <i>Melissa officinalis</i> )		x	
Cooking sage ( <i>Salvia officinalis</i> )		x	
*Feverfew ( <i>Chrysanthemum parthenium</i> )	x	x	
Artemisia			
Southernwood ( <i>Artemisia abrotanum</i> )	x	x	
*Sea wormwood ( <i>A. maritima</i> )	x	x	
Silvermound ( <i>A. schmidtiana</i> )	x	x	x
Silver Brocade ( <i>A. stelleriana</i> )	x		Lambs ear is a classic kids' plant.
*Mint:			
Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila			
Orange mint ( <i>Mentha citrata</i> )		x	x
Peppermint ( <i>Mentha piperita</i> )		x	x
Spearmint ( <i>Mentha spicata</i> )		x	x
*Sheep's fescue ( <i>Festuca ovina</i> )	x		
Pearly everlasting ( <i>Anaphalis spp.</i> )	x		
Pinks ( <i>Dianthus spp.</i> )			x
Prairie dropseed ( <i>Sporobolis heterolepsis</i> )	x	x	
Thrift ( <i>Armeria maritima</i> )	x		
Thyme ( <i>Thymus</i> varieties)	x	x	
Pussytoes ( <i>Antennaria dioica</i> )	x		x
Lavender ( <i>Lavandula angustifolia</i> )	x	x	
Hens and chicks ( <i>Sempervivum</i> varieties)			x
<b>Sun, annuals:</b>			
Dill ( <i>Anethum graveolens</i> )	x	x	
Dittany of Crete ( <i>Origanum dictamnus</i> )	x		
Scented geraniums ( <i>Pelargonium</i> varieties)	x	x	
<b>Part shade, perennials</b>			
Bigroot perennial geranium ( <i>G. macrorrhizum</i> )	x	x	
Pigsqueak ( <i>Bergenia cordifolia</i> )			x
Dwarf goatsbeard ( <i>Aruncus aethusifolius</i> )	x		
*Lady's mantle ( <i>Alchemilla mollis</i> )	x		x
*Sweet cicely ( <i>Myrrhis odorata</i> )	x	x	
Wild ginger ( <i>Asarum canadensis</i> )	x		
Japanese sedge ( <i>Carex morrowii</i> )	x		x