

TOP 25 OSK KID-APPROVED PLANTS

Rhode Island | Zone 6b-7a

Why Certain Plants "Stick" With Children

While teaching in the gardens at Heart's Ease, Sharon Lovejoy observed that some plants act like magnets — drawing children back again and again.

What makes a plant irresistible to children?

Key Qualities Children Love:

- **Fast Growth** – Kids want to see quick results from their care.
- **Personality** – Faces in pansies, snapdragons, sunflowers.
- **Fragrance** – Scent creates lasting memory.
- **Texture** – Soft, fuzzy, woolly leaves.
- **Vibrant Color** – Bright, riotous blooms.
- **Interactivity** – Plants that can be played with, crafted, eaten, or transformed.

Most importantly: Let children choose. Take them to nurseries. Let them follow what “twangs their heartstrings.”

ICON KEY

 Fast Grower

 Pollinator Friendly

 Edible

 Texture Play

 Fairy / Imaginative Play

 Night Bloomer

 Fragrant

 Vibrant Color

 Easy to Grow

Rhode Island Growing Notes

These selections tolerate:

- Spring cold snaps
- Humid summers
- Coastal wind
- Mixed soil types

Most are:

- ✓ Easy from seed
- ✓ Child-manageable
- ✓ Container adaptable
- ✓ Low-maintenance

Sprouts

Fast growers = instant confidence

Radishes

Ready in ~25 days. Rainbow “Easter Egg” varieties are extra magical.

Lettuce Mix

Quick cut-and-come-again harvest. Great for tiny hands.

Sugar Snap Peas

Fast climbers. Sweet straight off the vine.

Mint

Nearly indestructible. Container-friendly.

Zinnias

Fast from seed. Big color payoff.

Blooms

Color + personality plants

Sunflowers

The ultimate OSK playhouse plant.

Black-Eyed Susan

Cheerful and tough — thrives in RI.

Purple Coneflower (Echinacea)

Bold petals, strong stems.

Hollyhock

Tall and theatrical — doll skirts for days.

Cosmos

Light, airy, whimsical movement.

Wings

Pollinator magnets + life cycle learning

Milkweed (Native varieties)

Essential monarch host plant.

Bee Balm (Monarda)

Wild bursts of color. Hummingbird favorite.

Nasturtium

Easy edible annual. Loved by pollinators.

Lemon Balm

Soft scent. Bees adore it.

Columbine

Early-season nectar for spring pollinators.

Harvest

Edible, pickable, snackable.

Cherry Tomatoes (small varieties)

Currant or marble-sized are perfect.

Short Carrots

Sweet, satisfying to pull.

Alpine Strawberries

Tiny “fairy berries” that thrive in RI.

Basil

Container-friendly. Smells like summer.

Pumpkins (mini varieties)

Scratch names as they grow.

Wonder

Imaginative + sensory-rich plants

Woolly Lamb's Ear

Softest leaf in the garden. Sensory gold.

Four O'Clocks

Open late afternoon — daily magic trick.

Lavender

Calming scent. Hardy in sunny RI soil.

Thyme

Perfect fairy garden groundcover.

Scarlet Runner Beans

Fast-growing teepee plant with red blooms.