10 TIPS TO ENHANCE YOUR OUTDOOR PLAY SPACE

1. **Build a Sunflower House:** Plant sunflowers in a square, circle, or any other shape you'd like to create a living playhouse for hiding and hanging out.

2. **Willow Dome:** Create a permanent 'living' room for children to play in outdoors. Plant it in the winter to when spring comes the willow will start sprouting new roots and leaves.

3. **Mow a Meadow Maze:** Let your lawn grown. You can create a fun, natural playspace for your children to play. With the lawnmower carve out a maze or zigzag path.

4. **Plant Some Bulbs:** A strange and mysterious experience for children. Plant the bulbs in strategic, fun ways that act as colorful accents to your playspace features and pathways.

5. **Boom Drums:** Use plastic barrels and trim them to whatever size you want. Bolt them to the ground or not and let kids bang on them.

* Instructions for all of these enhancements can be found in Rusty Keeler's book, Natural Playscapes. A 26 page excerpt, including the above Do-It-Yourself Playscape Projects can be found at: www.earthplay.net.

6. **Pumpkins:** Place small pumpkins outside for children to touch, carry, and explore. Encourage children to take turns carrying and pushing them in a wheel barrel.

7. **Loose Parts:** Use blocks, boards, "tree cookies" (log slices), and milk crates for outdoor construction play. Give children chalk, fabric, paintbrushes, or water for enhanced imaginative play.

8. **Build a Vine Tepee:** Add a hideaway to children's playspace and naturalize their outdoor environment. Do-It-Yourself instructions can be found at: www.naturalearning.org.

9. **Color:** Brighten and create a welcoming environment by adding painted rocks, mosaic stepping stones, windsocks or pinwheels to your playspace.

10. **Recycled Materials:** Use your imagination. Add some cardboard boxes or pipes for construction play. Add tins, buckets, or bottles for children to bang on to create music and movement opportunities.

Did you Know?

9% of the population or 7.6 million children between ages 1 and 21 is deficient in Vitamin D, which can cause a host of health problems.

Increasing children's time outdoors can also increase their levels of Vitamin D.

Enhancing the environment at your center will not only increase children's physical activity but will increase their Vitamin D levels.