



Johnson's Garden Talk

Lawn and garden information for the friends and customers of Johnson's Garden Centers

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WEST 13th STORE

2707 West 13th St. N.
Wichita, KS 67203
316-942-1443

EAST STORE

6225 E. Shadybrook
(21st @ Woodlawn)
Wichita, KS 67203
316-687-5451

RIDGE ROAD STORE

802 N. Ridge Rd.
Wichita, KS 67212
316-943-0494

LANDSCAPE DESIGN & INSTALLATION NIGHTSCAPING

316-943-6886

CORPORATE OFFICE

316-942-3751

TOLL-FREE NUMBER

888-542-8463

EMAIL

askus@johnsonsgarden.com

WEB PAGE

www.johnsonsgarden.com

Gardening with Kids

Jan Decker, Junior Gardeners' Club Coordinator

Justin's favorite landscape feature is holes. Since the day he discovered a small shovel in our garage, he decided that we don't have enough holes in our yard and that it is his responsibility to remedy that problem. Finding an inconspicuous spot where holes wouldn't irritate grandpa was a challenge, so usually the request to excavate was denied. But last fall we quit saying no and showed him some boundaries where he could have the freedom to dig to his five-year-old heart's content.

This change of attitude came about when we decided it was time to get rid of some overgrown trees and shrubs around the house and let Johnson's landscape department give us a fresh, new, up-to-date look. So, before the job started, Justin came over, got his gardening gloves out of the cabinet, got his shovel out of the garage, and went to "work" in the yard. During this time we also introduced him to a pruning saw.

You're probably wondering how smart it is to encourage a child to dig up the yard and cut down trees. I'll admit we had some second thoughts about whether we made the right choice... maybe the landscaping should have waited until all of the grandchildren are grown.

So, looking back, was it a wise thing to do? You bet! Long after Justin outgrows the excitement of discovering worms in the soil, I'll cherish the memory of watching out the window as he showed his daddy everything he accomplished, "all by myself." In these early years kids need a chance to explore, to get dirty, and to make messes. The next step may be the desire to grow something in the holes.