

4-H Projects by Design Series

Discovering Growing Things - Pick-a-Topic

Introduction

Have you completed Exploring Growing Things? Have you tried your hand at outdoor gardening? Or do you want to try a growing things skill or topic that isn't covered in the Growing Things Series? The Discovering Growing Things - Pick-a-Topic project could be for you! This project will guide you through a planning process that will help you pick a growing things topic that interests you and set goals for your project year.



The project idea must not be covered under another 4-H project. Check to make sure your project does not have a 4-H manual more appropriate for your ideas. This project can be taken as many times as you wish.

Pat the pencil will be helping out along the way with information and resources that will support you in the success of your project. Your 4-H leader will also be with you to help, provide resources, and act as a mentor.

Good luck and have fun!

Larry's Amazing Leaders!



I've got some exciting and inspiring stories for you! Look for me in my super hero costume to hear the tale of amazing leaders who have made a difference in their worlds. I can't wait to tell you all about them!

Larry Says...

When you see me in this box, it's because I have some helpful hints and positive ideas! I hope to make your Growing Things Pick-a-Topic project as exciting as possible!



More Leaves!

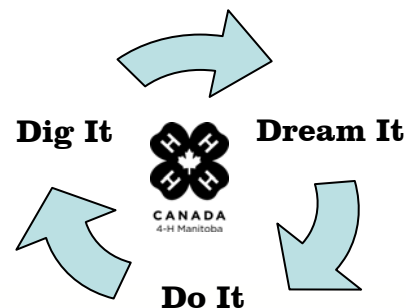
I can't wait to show you what I've found on-line! Check out my great link ideas wherever you see me in the computer screen.



Learning is 3D!

To help you get the most out of your learning, the project has the following parts:

Dream it! Plan for success
Do it! Hands on learning
Dig it! What did you learn?



MASTER
DISCOVER

EXPLORE

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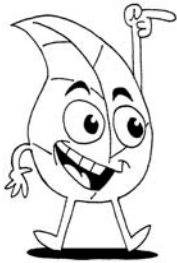
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- Revised 2016 -

What Skills Will You Learn?

Each section or Skill Builder (or Builder) in this project has activities that will help your project group learn to do by doing while learning new skills and having fun!

DISCOVER



To complete this project, you must:

- Develop a “4-H Project Plan” (part of Builder 1) and review it with your leader.
- Spend a minimum of 12 hours implementing your project plan. (and therefore 15-20 hours in the project)
- Complete the activities in each Builder.
- Plan and complete the Showcase Challenge.
- Complete the Portfolio Page.
- Participate in your club’s Achievement (See the inside back cover for more information about 4-H Achievements).

	Members will be able to...	Activities	Page
Skill Builder 1	Dream It!	• Pick What Topic?	3
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When you successfully complete your builders, you will showcase what you have learned.			
Showcase / Portfolio	• Explain success in using the skills listed above	• Showcase Challenge	21
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Skill Builder 1: Dream It !



What kind of project are you going to do?

Before going out and “doing” your project, you must do some planning to be sure that your final action matches your basic skills, skills you want to develop, and your interests and goals.

DISCOVER

Skills Checklist



- Identify personal interests
- Identify resources
- Develop a project plan including goals, resources and deadlines
- Discuss your project plan with your leader and get feedback
- Revise the plan
- Identify group decision making approaches



Important words

Watch for these important words throughout this builder:
Specific, Team, Consensus, Compromise, Coach

Pick What Topic?

You chose “Growing Things Pick-a-Topic” because you wanted to learn about a specific topic. What topic areas are you interested in for your project?

More Leaves



Visit <http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/4-h/> and/or www.4h.mb.ca to find a complete listing of Manitoba 4-H projects available.

The 4-H Project Catalogue and the 4-H Resource Guide also have project listings.

Before you start planning, check to see if this is a topic that is currently available - this would save planning a project!

Projects can be completed individually with a 4-H leader or with a group of 4-H members. If you are working with other members, the project plan should be completed by the group so everyone understands the goals and final results.

DISCOVER



Larry Says...

If you choose to do your project as a group or team, you need to decide how you will be making your decisions. You might choose:

- **Consensus** - everyone suggests and discusses ideas until everyone in the group has agreed on the decision.
- **Compromise** - everyone "gives and takes" until a decision is made that includes parts of everyone's ideas.
- **Majority Rules** - Whatever the majority decides, everyone must agree to. The problem is you get winners and losers with this style of decision making.
- **Flexibility** - Perhaps there are some project decisions that don't need every member to do the exact same thing. There usually are areas of the project that are fine for individual members to personalize and do it their way.

Throughout the 4-H year, you will likely use all of the above decision making methods within your group, with your 4-H club, or at a 4-H event.

Before making a final decision on the specific topic for your project, you should consider:

- What exactly do you want to learn about?
- Do you have the experience to understand and complete the project you have selected?
- How much time do you have and how much time will it take to learn your topic and then complete the project?
- Do you have or can you acquire the skills, equipment, resources, etc. to learn about the topic area?
- Do you know someone who can help/act as your leader with the project ?
- Have you set a realistic goal and will you be able to complete the project?
- Are you aware of the time and final cost of the project? Can you afford both?

If your answer is no to more than one or two of the questions you may want to reconsider your project choice or the specific goals you want to reach.

Let's Get Specific

Consider your topic area. Get specific. Be realistic. What exactly do you want to learn? Describe briefly the specific topic you want to explore in your project.

Why did you chose this topic?

Project Planning

1. Choosing an Adult Guide

Your 4-H leader is an important part of your work team. Depending on your age, your topic area and your skills, you may ask a 4-H leader to teach you specific project skills, to help you develop your project plan or to be a coach (there to help you on request or if you run into difficulties).



Discuss with your 4-H leader how you see them helping you with the project. Ask them how they are willing to help you?

Who is your 4-H Leader?

How have they agreed to help you?
(e.g. teach project skills, develop project plan, be a coach.)

2. Setting Goals

What kind of project goals do you have?

You have chosen this project and your topic for a reason. In your mind, you will have set certain goals for yourself. Goals are:

- Destinations you want to reach.
- Targets you aim for.
- Things you want to achieve or have to do.

Setting and achieving goals is important. People set goals for themselves in a variety of situations.



What are your 4-H project goals? You might have one goal or many goals that you would like to accomplish this year. Writing down your project goals will help you plan your progress and will help you measure your success.



DISCOVER

Goals are most effective when they are SMART goals. SMART goals are:

S - Is the goal *Specific*? A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. Does it tell who, what, where, when, why and how? Goals should be straightforward and emphasize what you want to happen. Specifics help us to **focus our efforts** and **clearly define what we are going to do**.

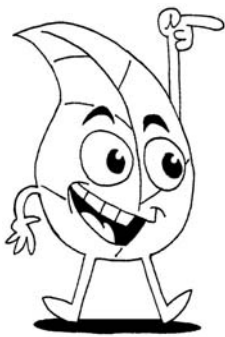
M - Is it *Measurable*? Can you tell when you have achieved it? Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress. When you measure your progress you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience the exhilaration of achievement that spurs you on to continued effort required to reach your goal. To determine if your goal is measurable, ask questions such as.....How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished? Choose a goal with measurable progress, **so you can see the change occur**.

A - Is it *Attainable*? Is your goal within your reach given your current situation? You can attain almost any goal you set when you plan your steps wisely and establish a time frame that allows you to carry out those steps. When you identify goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. **You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, and financial capacity to reach them**.

R - Is it *Realistic*? - To be realistic, a goal must represent something that you are **willing and able to complete**. Your goal is probably realistic if you truly *believe* that it can be accomplished. Additional ways to know if your goal is realistic is to determine if you have accomplished anything similar in the past or ask yourself what conditions would have to exist to accomplish this goal.

T - Is it *Timely*? - A goal should be grounded within a time frame. When do you want to complete your goal? Setting a timeframe sets your mind in motion to begin working on the goal. If you don't set a time, the commitment is too vague. Work tends not to happen because you feel you can start at any time. Without a time limit, there's no urgency to start taking action now. Putting an end point on your goal gives you a **clear target** to work towards.

EXAMPLE: A general goal would be, "Get in shape." But a SMART goal would say, "I will Join a health club and workout 3 times a week for three months with the help of a personal trainer to prepare for the Manitoba Marathon at the 4-H Gym starting Monday "



SMART Template

Using a template while creating goals can help you to remember to include all the necessary information to create a SMART goal.



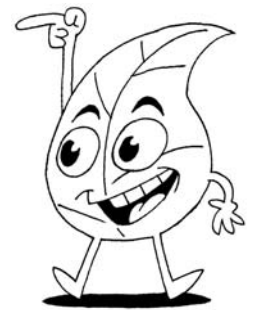
_____ will _____
(Who) (Action) (What/How) (By what criteria) (Where) (By what date)

With your project group and/or your leader, practice using the template by discussing and creating goals for planning a 4-H event.

SMART Test

Take the following goal and evaluate how SMART you think it is by checking off whether or not it is Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely.

Goal: I will learn how to reduce my energy consumption by reading about energy reducing techniques and talking to a Manitoba Hydro representative, then try the techniques and watch my home's hydro meter to see my energy consumption go down by Achievement.



Specific?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Measurable?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Attainable?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Realistic?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Timely?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

If you had answered no to any of the above, the goal would need to be revised so it would pass the SMART test.

Project Goal Setting

Are you ready to set your project goals? You may have one or several goals.

- Step 1. Set your goals.
- Step 2. Do the SMART test.
- Step 3. Did the SMART test show that you need to revise your goal? If it did, revise the goal to pass the SMART test.





Goal #1

Step 1 - Goal:

Step 2 - Did it pass the SMART test?

Specific? Yes No

Measurable? Yes No

Attainable? Yes No

Realistic? Yes No

Timely? Yes No



Step 3 - If you answered no to any of the above, revise the goal so it will pass the SMART TEST.

If your Growing Things Pick-a-Topic project has more than one goal, repeat the SMART test on each goal until they pass the test.

3. Achieving Your Goals - Make a Project Plan

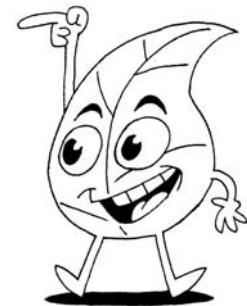
You have set goal(s) for your 4-H project. A project plan is used to organize the steps needed to complete these goals. This plan will include steps to take, necessary equipment, people to help you along the way and a timeline for you to follow.

Use your project plan to figure out what you need to do to reach your goal(s). You will need resources including:

- time
- equipment and supplies
- people

Make a list of the resources you think you will need for your project:

To achieve your goals, you, your leader and your teammates agree to a plan that involves learning or strengthening specific skills and putting them into action. With specific steps scheduled, you will be sure that you work steadily towards your goals.



A project's steps to start to recycle and limit energy use at home may look like this:

Steps to be Done	Date(s)
Read book on recycling and reducing energy use in homes	Nov. 1
Tour a local recycling depot	Dec. 1
Purchase a recycling box and supplies to energy proof your home	Dec. 5
Set-up energy reducing products around the home (e.g. switching light bulbs etc)	Dec. 10
Keep track of how much recycled product is not going in the garbage.	Dec. 31, Jan. 31, Feb 28, Mar. 31 etc
Examine energy consumption meters for you home.	Dec. 31, Jan. 31, Feb 28, Mar. 31 etc
Showcase your project findings	Achievement date



Gathering Feedback

Use the Draft Project Plan on the next two pages to write out your project plan. Be sure to include all the activities and resources as well as a target date.

HINT: The date can be a deadline or the exact date you plan to do the activity on.

Be sure to consult with your leader and discuss your plan . They may have suggestions for changes to your plan or other resource people you could approach for guidance.

Use the second copy of the Draft Project Plan to write out your revised plan.

Discussing your 4-H Project Plan with your leader is an important step because:

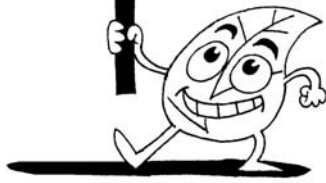
- It gives you an opportunity to receive feed back on your plan.
- It may connect you to professionals or experts in the community.



When you receive feedback, consider the suggestions. Include any letters, emails or correspondence to your project book.

DISCOVER

Did you get any suggestions about...



Resources to consider

Plans for improvement

People to contact?

Additional project ideas

Using Feedback



After receiving feedback I ...

(e.g. changed/edited my plan, took suggestions, made an additional goal, looked at resources, continued to plan my project etc.)

What's next?

Once you have fine tuned your project plan you can move on to the next builder. In the next builder, you will discuss the importance of keeping records during a project.

4-H Growing Things Pick - a - Topic Project Plan

Team Members: _____

Club: _____

Please return plan to (Return Address / Email): _____

Specific Project Topic: _____

Leader Name: _____

He/She will be: (check all that apply)

- teaching project skills
- helping develop project plan
- serving as an adult guide upon request
- other (please explain)

At Achievement (or another suitable time) the project will be showcased by:

List your specific goals, activities, resources needed and target dates on page two, Add another page if needed.



Specific Goals	Activities	Resources Needed (equipment, people to help, resources, funding)	Target Date

4-H Growing Things Pick - a - Topic Project Plan

Team Members: _____



Club: _____

Please return plan to (Return Address / Email): _____

Specific Project Topic: _____

Leader Name: _____

He/She will be: (check all that apply)

- teaching project skills
- helping develop project plan
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- other (please explain)

At Achievement (or another suitable time) the project will be showcased by:

List your specific goals, activities, resources needed and target dates on page two, add another page if needed.

Specific Goals	Activities	Resources Needed (equipment, people to help, resources, funding)	Target Date

Skill Builder 2: Do It! Put Your Plan Into Action



What to do?

You have set yourself up to succeed by carefully planning your project. Now it is time to actually complete the steps that you outlined in your 4-H project plan.

DISCOVER



Skills Checklist

- Complete project plans & goals
- Discuss being flexible with plans



Important words

Watch for these important words throughout this builder:
Alternative, "Plan B"

"Plan B"

As you work through your project, remember a plan is a guide for accomplishing your goal(s). You may have to make changes to your original plan as you go along. Can you come up with a "Plan B" if something were unable to happen? What reasons might you have to change your plans? Discuss alternative options with your 4-H group or leader.

Learn To Do By Doing

Spend a minimum of 12 hours to complete your 4-H Project Plan's activities and achieve your goal. Good luck and have fun!



Larry Says...

As you put your 4-H project plan into action, there are many resources that can help you to be successful.

Your library, 4-H Resource Guide, Manitoba Agriculture staff, 4-H leaders, and local role models can provide valuable support and information to you.

Be sure to make the most of your experience by using your network of resources.

Changes

Did you make changes to your project plan? Changes to my project plan included:

What's Next?

In the next builder you will keep track of our time and resources as you complete your project goals.

Skill Builder 3: Do It! Keeping Track

DISCOVER

Why keep track?

In your 4-H project, keeping track of your progress helps you to:

- See what you learned. Helps you to understand and gain more from your experiences.
- Keep a record of equipment and people you used (in case you want to use them again or thank them).
- Know how many hours you spent on your project.
- Know what your project costs.
- Provides a descriptive project summary that can be used to evaluate your project.
- Gives you a clear picture of how successfully you have accomplished your goals.



Skills Checklist



- Keep Records
- Monitor progress
- Identify options to keep organized

Important words

Watch for these important words throughout this builder:

Journal, Documentation, Record Keeping, Progress



Keeping Track

You can increase the amount of knowledge you can gain from this project by:

- **Keeping a learning journal.** A learning journal is like a diary that you write in after each experience that you have. Record your challenges and successes. How did you deal with them, how did you feel, what did you do, how would you handle it differently the next time, what did you learn. It's great to review at the end of the project and see what progress you made.
- **Keeping a calendar** that logs your time and expenses in your project. People usually underestimate the amount of time and money that they have contributed. Remember to include gas money for any trips taken!
- **Preparing a photo journal.** Pictures are worth a thousand words. Record your project experience through photos.
- **Developing a portfolio** of your experience. Save any letters, reports, photos, comments, awards, name badges, etc. of your experience. Display them to show what skills you have accomplished.
- **Starting a resource library.** Research and collect information that helps you reach your goals for this project - for example background information on the topic you are studying or new skills you learned.



Can you describe a situation in your life where you have seen why it is important to "keep track"?

(Hint: Keeping track is important at many sporting events. How does this occur? Who does this?)

Progress Chart

For your Growing Things Pick-a-Topic project, complete the following progress chart to keep track.

The first line has been filled out as an example.

TIP: Take a minute to fill out your progress chart each time you work on your project. Keeping up to date on records is the trick to making record keeping easy.

Remember, if you use basic supplies from your home, these items still have a cost. Please write "supplied" beside all items used from home.



Progress Chart				
Date	Step(s) Done	Equipment and People	Cost	Hours Spent
Oct..17	<i>Found and reviewed information on how to sponge paint</i>	<i>Paint store pamphlet, video "A Sponge and a Wall" from library, bought a home decorating book "The Art of Sponge Painting"</i>	<i>Book cost \$20.00</i>	<i>3</i>
Sub-total:				

Progress Chart

Date	Step(s) Done	Equipment and People	Cost	Hours Spent
Total:				

Summary

After you have completed your project, look back at your record keeping.

- Number of hours spent on my project _____ hours. Is this time surprising? ___Yes ___No
- Number of dollars spent on my project \$_____. Is this cost surprising? ___Yes ___No

What's Next?

In the final builder, you will evaluate your completed project and celebrate your success.

Skill Builder 4: Dig It!

Evaluate & Celebrate Your Success!



Why is it important to reflect?

By reflecting on past experiences we can learn and change how we do things in the future to improve our actions. Evaluation is an important step to learning AND to celebrating your successes.



Skills Checklist

- Describe the importance of reflection
- Celebrate your successes



Important words

Watch for these important words throughout this builder:
Celebrate, Success, Reflect, Evaluation

Looking Back

What can you learn from reflecting on your experiences? Look over your progress chart and 4-H manual to reflect on your experiences with your project. Discuss this with your project group.

"If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you have always gotten."
- Brian R. King

Evaluating Success

Evaluation is an important step to learning and to be able to celebrate your successes. You need to know what you were successful at to be able to celebrate it!

1. Did you achieve your goals? If you were unable to meet some goals, what goals were you unable to meet and why?

2. Did your project plan change? If yes, how did it change?

6. What did you learn by doing your project?

3. What changes would you make if you were doing this project again?

5. What was the most challenging part of your project?

4. What was the most successful part of your project?



DISCOVER

Discussing, sharing and celebrating your experiences and successes is important! This can help you:

- Encourage others to join you in continuing your learning and having fun.
- Encourage others to take on an exciting Pick-a-Topic
- Reflect and make changes for the future.
- Show off new skills.

So...

Celebrate

Way to



I Celebrate Me!



I am worth celebrating. I am worth everything. I am unique. In the whole world there is only one me. There is only one person with my talents, experience, and gifts. No one can take my place.

I have immense potential to love, care, create, grow and succeed - If I believe in myself. I am accepted, I am okay. I am loved even though I'm not perfect. I love myself. I celebrate me.

I am me, and that's all I need to be. I celebrate the miracles, and I celebrate me.

- Anonymous

Thoughtful Thanks!

Celebrate your success with others! Think about who helped you along the way. Sending a thank you card to those who helped you (e.g. 4-H leaders, parents, friends, business people, sponsors etc.) can be a great way to show appreciation and to let others know of your success.

Send a card or cards!

NOTE: Whether you purchase or create your card(s), make sure you personalize it with a message.

What's Next?

The showcase challenge is next. It is time to show what you have learned throughout your project.

Showcase Challenge

Bringing it all together!



Now that you have finished this project, it is time to think about how you will share your experiences and knowledge with others. You may put your new skills to work by helping at a community event or at your club Achievement or teaching others about your topic. The goal of the Showcase Challenge is to help highlight your new skills and help you understand how you can use them. It can be an opportunity to receive feedback from others on your project. So go back through your manual and find some highlights of your learning (what you are proud of) and think about how you will “showcase” it.

Here are some Showcase Challenge Suggestions:

- Demonstrate something you made or learned about
- Make a poster or display
- Make a pamphlet
- Make a computer presentation (e.g. PowerPoint)
- Give a speech
- Write a report
- Use your new skills to help with the Club Achievement plans
- Or come up with your own idea. It is up to you and your leader!



My Showcase Challenge Plan



My showcase idea: _____

What materials and resources do I need? _____

Who do I need to help me? _____

When do I need to have things done by? _____



DISCOVER

Insert or attach your finished product or a photo of you sharing your skills in your Showcase Challenge.



Now that you have showcased your project skills:

- How did your Showcase Challenge go?
- What would you do differently next time?
- How will you use your new skills in the future? (*in different situations?*)





My 4-H Portfolio Page



Name: _____ Date: _____ Year in 4-H: _____
 Club: _____ Hours Spent on 4-H: _____ (Project and Other 4-H Activities)



Discovering Growing Things Pick-a-Topic Skills Chart

To be completed by the leader and the member based on observations and conversations throughout the project.

Skill Builder	Members will be able to... Each Builder had a Skills Checklist which identified the skill you will learn.	We know this because... Identify activities completed and record observations and information from discussions about activities.
1	Dream It! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify personal interests and project topic Identify resources Develop a project plan including goals, resources and deadlines Discuss your project plan with your leader for feedback Revise the plan 	
2	Do It! Put Your Plan Into Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete project plans & goals Discuss being flexible with plans 	
3	Do it! Keeping Track <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep Records Monitor progress Identify options to keep organized 	
4	Dig It! Evaluate & Celebrate Success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the importance of reflection Celebrate your successes 	
Showcase Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain success in using the skills listed above 	

Additional Comments/Activities:

Leader Point of Praise!

I am most impressed by...

I acknowledge that the member has completed the 4-H project requirements.

Leader's Signature: _____



Above and Beyond!

In addition to project skills, 4-H also increases skills in meeting management, communications, leadership and community involvement through participation in club, area, or provincial 4-H events or activities. List below any activities you participated in this year in 4-H.

(Some examples include Executive Positions Held, Workshops, Communication, Community Service, Rally, Bonspiels, Conferences, Judging, Camps, Trips, Awards, Representation to Area or Provincial Councils, etc)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Feel Free to add additional pages that include awards, certificates, new clippings, photos or other items that describe your 4-H involvement.

Member Point of Pride!

What I learned...

What I need to improve on...

What I want others to notice...

Member's Signature: _____



Point of Praise! Another's perspective on your achievements in 4-H.

(community professionals, 4-H club head leaders, parent, friend,)

I am most impressed by...

I believe that you have learned...

In the future I encourage you to...

Signature: _____





CANADA
4-H Manitoba

4-H Achievement

4-H Achievement is... a 4-H club celebration when members have completed their projects. Achievements are planned by the club to give recognition to members and leaders for their accomplishments in their 4-H projects and club activities.



A 4-H Achievement can take many different formats: from choosing a theme, to member project displays, to members using their new skills for the event (entertainment, food, decorating, photographer, etc.), to members presenting their project to the whole group, the options are endless and open to the creativity of the members and leaders in each club!

Clubs may also plan their Achievement to promote 4-H to the community or to recognize sponsors and others who have helped the club.

Members and leaders - be sure to check your project books for the project completion requirements, so you will be ready for your club's Achievement celebration!

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions for this or other 4-H projects contact:

Manitoba 4-H Projects
Manitoba Agriculture
1129 Queens Avenue
Brandon, MB R7A 1L9

Email: 4h@gov.mb.ca

Phone: 204-726-6613

Fax: 204-726-6260

CANADA
4-H Manitoba

This manual is for educational use only and is not intended as professional advice.

For more information about 4-H and the many 4-H opportunities available please visit

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/4-h/>



What is 4-H?

4-H is an international youth organization involving more than 7 million members in 80 countries around the world.

In Canada, 4-H began in 1913 in Roland, Manitoba as a community-based organization dedicated to growth and development of rural youth. Today's 4-H program reaches both farm and non-farm youth across Canada. The motto of "Learn to Do by Doing" is embodied in the program, as 4-H focuses on skill development as well as personal development of life skills such as communications, leadership and citizenship.



4-H Motto

"Learn To Do by Doing"

4-H Pledge

I pledge,
My HEAD to clearer thinking,
My HEART to greater loyalty,
My HANDS to larger service,
My HEALTH to better living,
For my club, my community, and my country.

All project materials are available in alternate format upon request.

Manitoba 4-H project material is developed by
Manitoba Agriculture