



PLANTING PARSLEY

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It's Tu B'Shevat, the birthday of the trees! This book shows you how to mark the occasion by planting a tiny parsley "tree" – and it'll be ready to eat just in time for Passover.

JEWISH CONCEPTS

The Jewish holiday *Tu B'Shevat*, popularly known as the Birthday of the Trees, is both a time to celebrate the environment and also a reminder of our role in taking care of it. Jewish law sets guidelines for proper treatment of the land, including when to first harvest a tree's fruit (not until the tree is at least three years old) and the warning that even in war, soldiers must leave their enemy's fruit trees alone. To harm a tree is an example of *bal tashchit*, wasteful destruction, and it is firmly prohibited in the *Torah* (the first five books of the Bible).

It is customary to plant new trees on Tu B'Shevat. The holiday arrives on the fifteenth day of the Jewish month of *Shevat*, which falls in midwinter -- so in many parts of the world, planting trees outdoors isn't practical. Even so, you and your child can plant something small, like parsley! You just need a little dirt, a container, some water, and a spot of sunshine. As this book points out, planting parsley on Tu B'Shevat gives just the right amount of time to harvest a little fresh parsley for Passover, the holiday that arrives about two months later. Your parsley can be used as *karpas*, one of the symbolic foods on the seder plate. This project helps bring the natural world *and* the Jewish world alive for small children – and underscores the bond between the two.