



DIY Seed Starter Pots

Materials

- 1 cardboard egg carton (plastic egg cartons won't work for this activity because the plastic will not decompose in the soil when planted)
- Flower, Vegetable, or Herb Seeds
- Potting soil (or well worked backyard soil)
- Scissors
- Shovel

Directions

1. Pre-mix potting soil with water. Aim for a damp, but not soaking, level of moisture in your soil - similar to a wet sponge! If using backyard soil, moisten the soil and work it between your fingers so that there are no large, heavy clumps.
2. Cut off the lid of your egg carton to use as a tray. Then, cut out the cells of your egg carton into separate cups. Be sure to ask for assistance if you need help using scissors.
3. Fill your each cell up with soil, making sure to fill them up completely, leaving no gaps or spaces.
4. Refer to your seed packet for the required seed depth, typically $\frac{1}{4}$ -2 inches. You can use a ruler to measure your finger or a planting stick as a guide. As a general rule of thumb, your fingernail is $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, the first knuckle of your finger is 1 inch, and the first 2 knuckles of your finger are 2 inches long.
5. Use your finger or a stick to poke a hole in the soil at the correct depth, place the seed inside, and then cover it up with soil. Alternatively, you can fill your pot halfway with soil, place your seed in the pot, and then cover the seed with the required thickness of soil.
6. After you have sown seeds in all of your pots, place your tray in a sunny, warm spot and water it gently! Be sure to keep the soil moist with regular waterings



throughout the germination process! Seeds need sun, water, and soil to start growing, so once you have provided all three, sit back and watch your seeds grow!

7. Once your seeds have sprouted, watch for your sprouts to grow a second set of leaves. These leaves will generally have a different shape than the first set (the baby leaves) and are called the “true leaves!” When you can clearly see the true leaves, it’s time to transplant your seedling into the ground or into a bigger pot.
8. To transplant your seedling, work the soil with a shovel so that it becomes crumbly and soft. Dig a hole and place your seedling, egg carton and all, into the hole. Cover your plant back up with soil so that the egg carton is just covered. Then, firmly press the soil around your plant to pack it in place.
9. Water your plant after transplanting, and keep it watered regularly so that the soil does not dry out too much. Lastly, enjoy watching your plant continue to grow!

Material Substitutes

- Don’t have an egg carton? Use any paper-based household item, such as small paper Dixie cups, cut up and folded toilet paper rolls, or even egg shell halves as your pots instead!
- Use an old spoon in place of a shovel.
- No seeds on hand? Check your spice rack for herb seeds like coriander (which grows into cilantro) or dill seeds and experiment with sowing those!

Other activities for Earth Day:

- Begin a food scrap collection in your kitchen to sort into green waste, or start your own backyard compost pile!
- Pick up trash in your neighborhood.
- Draw and put up signs in your home to remind your loved ones to turn off lights and to conserve water