

Grow Big or Grow Home

Turn tired tyres into blooming marvellous garden beds to add colour and encourage wildlife into even the smallest outdoor spaces.



Time | 3 hrs
Cost | ££
Location | Outdoors
Group size | Pairs

You will learn

Value the outdoors

Enjoy being outside, feel comfortable in nature, and feel connected to the natural environment.

Helping your community

Be able to take an active role in the community, give to others, and make the world a better place.

You will need

- Access to water
- Buckets
- Something to protect surfaces (for example, newspaper or tablecloths)
- Paint
- Paint brushes
- Gardening tools
- Gardening gloves
- Lollipop sticks
- Permanent markers
- Old tyres
- Cloths
- Dish soap
- Bricks
- Vinyl contact paper (optional)
- Hessian sheet or stones (for tyre planters on the ground)
- A drill, a block of wood, large eye screws and industrial hanging hooks (for hanging tyre planters)
- Gravel or stones
- Peat-free compost
- Seeds or plants

Begin you begin

- Decide on the location for your tyre planter and make sure you have permission to build there.
- Source old tyres. Try calling local garages or recycling centres, check classified ads websites for people giving away tyres in your area, or ask the group if they or anyone they know has tyres they no longer need.
- Plan your plants or seeds according to the space you have. For example, tomatoes need a long, flat, stable container (so a single tyre will work fine), while potatoes need a deep space for the tubers to grow (consider stacking two or three tyres on top of each other). Courgettes, marrows and squashes need lots of ground surface around the planting area, so you should only plant one type of vegetable per tyre. Raspberries and cherry tomatoes need space to grow tall and may need canes to support them. Choose plants that are native to the UK and pesticide and peat-free. Choose seeds that are organically grown and not genetically modified.
- Source peat-free compost. Because of peatbog depletion, peat is a limited resource. Find out more about peat-free compost, and how to make it work for your plants with the [RHS's peat-free growing advice](#).

Tidy up your tires

1. Everyone should clean the tyres by scrubbing with a cloth dampened in soapy water. Get the cloth between the tread groves to remove dirt, grease, and grime.
2. In a well-ventilated area, lay down something to protect surfaces from paint before decorating the tyres. Prop tyres onto bricks to be able to paint all sides.
3. Everyone should start painting. For block colour, spray paint works best. Check it's a combination paint with primer, and that it's suitable for use on plastic. You'll need several coats for full coverage meaning one average car-sized tyre will require two or three spray cans. For more intricate designs, use outdoor acrylic or outdoor latex paint. Try painting freehand designs or creating stencils using vinyl contact paper.
4. Allow tyres to dry for at least a few hours.



Prepare your planters

1. Everyone should discuss what plants need to grow: light, water and nutrients (usually from soil).
2. Everyone should decide on the best location for the tyre planter and the shape it will take. If you have enough space (such as a non-allocated parking spot in a car park, or a small area in a communal park or playground) you can place the tyres directly on the ground. If outdoor space is limited, think vertical instead or horizontal by creating hanging tyre planters.
3. Everyone should think about how water will easily drain through the planters.
4. For tyres being laid on the ground, it's useful to line the bottom with a hessian sheet. If you don't have a hessian sheet, place stones or rocks at the bottom of the tyres for drainage.
5. For hanging tyres, drill holes in the bottom of the tyre as it hangs. Put a block of wood behind the surface you're making holes in and make sure an adult is involved to keep this step safe.
6. Everyone should put the empty tyres in their chosen locations. The tyres shouldn't be moved once they are planted, so as not to disturb the lining, soil or seeds. For hanging tyres, use a drill to attach a large eye screw to a wall and secure an industrial hanging hook to it. The hook must be capable of holding the tyre's weight (typically up to 15kg), and the weight of stones, soil and plants.

Get growing

1. Everyone should line the bottom of their tyre with gravel or stones to help it drain.
2. Everyone should fill their tyre with peat-free compost.
3. Use gardening tools to place the plants or seeds.
4. Everyone should label the planters by writing the names of the plants on lollypop sticks with permanent markers.



Keep up the care

1. Once the tyre garden is planted, plan times when the group can visit it to ensure it's well fed and watered, and to harvest any fruit and vegetables that have grown. Have a look at the RHS's plant care advice to work out the specific things your plant needs to grow happily.
2. If you need to remove or replace the tyres, they can be recycled and turned into carpet underlay, road surfacing, laminate flooring, sports pitches, cement kiln fuel or even a play area. To ensure your planter goes onto a new life, get in touch with Recycle Now or National Tyre Recovery.

Reflection

Time	Activity
5 mins	This activity was all about valuing the outdoors by creating an environment for plants, and helping the community by stopping tyres from going to landfill. Did the group enjoy getting stuck into planting seeds or plants? Do people think they'll be able to take good care of the plants in their recycled planters? How will the planter help their local environment? Think about encouraging wildlife (including bugs) to the area and making it a greener place for everyone to enjoy.

Change the level of challenge

The group could approach local businesses to ask for their support with this project. They could donate seeds or soil, or provide a space to locate the planters in.

Make it accessible

Set the materials up so everyone can access them – some people may want to work on the floor while others use a table. You could offer gloves if anyone doesn't like the texture of the compost.

All Scout activities should be **inclusive and accessible**.

Safety

All activities must be safely managed. Use the **safety checklist** to help you plan and risk assess your activity. Do a **risk assessment** and take appropriate steps to reduce risk. Always get approval for the activity and have suitable **supervision** and an **InTouch** process.

- **Scissors**
Supervise young people appropriately when they're using scissors. Store all sharp objects securely, out of the reach of young people.
- **Outdoor activities**
You must have permission to use the location. Always check the weather forecast and inform parents and carers of any change in venue.
- **Animals and insects**
Be aware of the risks before interacting with animals. Be aware of anyone with allergies, and make alternative arrangements for them.
- **Gardening and nature**
Everyone must wash their hands after the activity has finished. Wear gloves if needed. Explain how to safely use equipment and set clear boundaries so everyone knows what's allowed.
- **Sharp objects**
Teach young people how to use sharp objects safely. Supervise them appropriately throughout. Store all sharp objects securely, out of the reach of young people.
- **Glue and solvents**
Supervise young people appropriately when they're using glue and solvent products. Make sure there's plenty of ventilation. Be aware of any medical conditions which could be affected by glue or solvent use and make adjustments as needed.
- **Rubbish and recycling**
Be aware of the risks before interacting with animals. Be aware of anyone with allergies, and make alternative arrangements for them. All items should be clean and suitable for this activity.

- **PPE**

Before completing this activity make sure you have suitable personal protective equipment (PPE). This could include eye or ear protection, gloves, and anything else you need to protect yourself. You'll know what you need as a result of completing the risk assessment for the activity.

- **Spray canister products**

Look at the advice on COSHH (control of substances hazardous to health) and check the manufacturer's advice. You may need to include controls such as good ventilation, using a face mask and gloves, and being careful not to use it near ignition sources.

- **Hand and electric tools**

- Inspect tools for any damage before each use. An adult should supervise people using tools, and people should follow instructions on how to use them correctly and safely. Tools should be properly maintained and kept sharp.
- Use an appropriate surface and make sure materials are stable and supported when you're working on them. You should cut and drill away from the body and in an area clear of other people.
- Be extra cautious of trailing cables and water when using electric tools; use a cordless tool if one's available.

