

Trashing the Landscape



Turn trash into treasure by using recycled materials to create green spaces in your local area.

Time | 3 hrs

Cost | ££

Location | Outdoors

Group size | Teams

You will learn

Help develop your community

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

Value the outdoors

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

You will need

- Gardening tools
- Gardening gloves
- Access to water
- Permanent markers
- Lollipop sticks
- Watering can
- Gravel or stones
- Peat-free compost
- Seeds or plants
- Equipment and items specific to your chosen project



Before you begin

Ask the group to save items that might be suitable for transforming into a recycled green space, such as old furniture, bicycle wheels or glass bottles.

Decide on a location for your recycled green space. Remember to get permission for the location you choose.

Plan out your recycled green space and source the equipment needed to create it, which will be specific to your chosen project.

Get ready to plant

1. Everyone should discuss what plants need to grow: light, water, and nutrients (usually from soil).
2. The person leading the activity should explain that you don't need acres of green space to grow things. It's easy to take items that would have been thrown in the bin and turn them into homes for plants.
3. Everyone should think about the kind of green space they could create using the materials they have. We've suggested some projects, but you can be as creative as you like!

Bottle borders

1. Everyone should help to collect large glass bottles.
2. Water the patch of grass you will be landscaping, to soften the soil.
3. Everyone should help to mark out the borders of the space using rope, string or a hose. Depending on how many bottles you have collected, consider creating a small circular space or a long, rectangular garden alongside a wall or path.
4. Using a square-edged shovel, dig out the soil along the lines you've marked out, creating a trench between four and six inches deep.
5. Everyone should help to place the bottles with their necks facing downwards into the trench. If you want a space between each bottle, use a brick to create even spacing.
6. Fill the trench with soil, so only a half of the bottle (or less) is visible. Consider decorating any gaps between the bottles with small pebbles or shells.
7. Everyone should get involved with planting inside the bottle edges with a variety of fruit, vegetables and flowers. When watering this garden space, pour some water over the bottles too. Most glass bottles have an indent on the bottom, and small amounts of water pool in this – making the perfect watering hole for small bugs and bees.

You will need

- A grassy area
- Large glass bottles
- Shovel
- Rope, string or a garden hose
- Bricks (optional)



Leafy drawers

1. Lay down something to protect the surfaces, and completely pull out each drawer. Set each drawer on old bricks so it can be painted on all sides without sticking to the newspaper or tarpaulin.
2. Paint the drawers, both inside and outside, in a few coats of garden paint. Choose paint designed to protect wood from the elements, so that it doesn't rot. Paint the empty chest of drawers too.
3. When the drawers are all dry, drill some holes in the bottom of each.
4. Line the bottom of each drawer with a sheet of hessian.
5. Slot the drawers back into the chest and pull them out at varying widths.
6. Fill the bottom of each drawer with gravel or stones to help it drain. For the drawers that are more closed, use larger stones or bricks to block out the unseen space at the back of the drawer. This means you only need to spread compost in the spaces where plants will be growing.
7. Everyone should fill the drawers with peat-free compost.
8. The person leading the activity should give everyone some plants or seeds to add to their planter. Write the names of the plants on lollypop sticks using marker pens.

You will need

- An old chest of drawers
- Something to protect surfaces, for example a tarpaulin or newspaper
- Bricks
- Garden paint
- Paintbrushes
- A drill
- Hessian sheets
- Scissors



Bicycle trellis

1. Lay down something to protect the surfaces.
2. Everyone should clean the bicycle wheels thoroughly with a cloth and hot soapy water, making sure to get dirt, grease and grime out of the grooves.
3. Rest each wheel on a brick, and then paint with a few layers of outdoor acrylic or outdoor latex paint. Alternatively, if you have a well-ventilated space you could use spray paint.
4. When the wheels are dry, it's time to build them into a trellis. If you have an uneven number of wheels lay them flat in a triangle shape; otherwise create a rectangle.
5. Drill holes in the rims, where you hope to connect wheels together.
6. Push a bolt through the holes in the rims, and secure the wheels together by screwing on a nut.
7. Continue to join the wheels together until they are secure in the group's chosen pattern.
8. Water the patch of grass where your trellis will go, to soften the soil.
9. Using a shovel, dig a trench. It should be deep enough so that only half the bicycle wheel is above the ground.
10. Place the trellis into the trench, along with a wooden post on either side of the trellis. Members of the group will need to hold everything in place while others backfill the trench with soil.
11. Drill some holes in the rims of the wheels which are touching the wooden posts. Hammer a nail through the rim and into the wood to fully secure the trellis to the posts.
12. Everyone should help with the planting. This upcycled creation is perfect for climbing plants like ivy, clematis and honeysuckle. Alternatively, try growing some tasty treats like vine tomatoes or climbing peas.

You will need

- A grassy area
- Old bicycle wheels
- Something to protect surfaces, for example a tarpaulin or newspaper
- Access to water
- Dish soap
- Cloths
- Bricks
- Paint
- Paintbrushes
- A drill
- Nuts
- Bolts
- Shovel
- Wooden posts



Keep up the care

Once your garden is planted, you'll need to plan times when you can visit to ensure it is well fed and watered, and any fruit or vegetables are harvested.

Have a look at the [RHS's plant care advice](#) and work out the specific things your plant needs to grow happily.



Reflection

Time	Activity
15 mins	This activity was all about valuing the outdoors by creating a space for plants, and helping the community by stopping unwanted items from being sent to landfill or becoming litter. Did the group enjoy turning trash into treasure? What other things that often end up in the bin could you use for creating green spaces?
	Do the group 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

Make the structure as simple or complex as you want. You can scale each project down – creating small glass bottle edgings for a mini herb garden, or using just one drawer as a planter, or a single wheel attached to a fence or wall as a trellis.

Make it accessible

Adults can take a step back or get more involved depending on how the group is getting on.

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

Take it further

If you are growing vegetables, consider organising a local food festival where you make dishes using the different vegetables you've grown.



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.

- **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.

- **Rubbish and recycling**

All items should be clean and suitable for this activity.

- **Scissors**

Supervise young people appropriately when they're using scissors. Store all sharp objects securely, out of the reach of young people.

- **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.

- **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.

