

# Bins in Bloom



Time | 1 hr 30  
Cost | ££  
Location | Outdoors  
Group size | Individuals

**Rescue rubbish from the bin and use it creatively to make your garden green in more than one way.**

## You will learn

### Value the outdoors

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

### Help 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

- Clean items of recycling
- Scissors
- Hole punch
- Gardening tools
- String
- Compost
- Sticky labels
- Plants or seeds
- Trays or plates
- Watering can
- Craft knife (optional)
- Sharp screwdriver or nail (optional)
- Block of wood (optional)



## Before you begin

- Everyone should collect items that, with a bit of imagination, could make great plant pots. You can get creative with this, from reusing fruit or vegetable punnets, to giving old shoes a new life. If you've done Litter splitter, you could use items of litter already collected.
- Everyone should think about the sorts of plants they'd like to grow. Different plants have different needs, so think about the plants that will work best for your group and the items you have to hand.
- Will they need good drainage?
- How much space will they have to grow?

## Reduce, reuse, recycle

1. Everyone should discuss the principles of 'reduce, reuse, recycle'. As well as making sure we dispose of our waste responsibly, we can help to protect the environment by:
  - reducing the amount of waste we create
  - reusing items
  - recycling anything that can be recycled
2. Everyone should discuss what can be recycled locally, and how. Think about what you can put in your recycling bins at home. Can anyone think of something that would need to be taken to a recycling centre or collection point (for example at a supermarket)? What about things that aren't currently recyclable? Find out about [recycling in your local area](#).
3. Encourage everyone to share examples of something they've reused in a new way. Discuss how creating plant pots can be great way of reusing items that would otherwise have gone to landfill or have required energy to be recycled. Using them to grow plants instead means we'll help the environment in lots of ways.

## Environmentally friendly gardening

- Everyone should talk about why growing plants can be good for our environment. Plants help to absorb carbon dioxide from the air. They can create food for us, provide habitats for wildlife, and help regulate the water cycle as well.
- Everyone should think of ways we can be environmentally friendly gardeners. This means thinking carefully about which plants to grow and how we grow them. We should avoid non-native invasive plants and try to go peat-free. We could grow bee-friendly plants or reduce our food miles by growing our own food.



## Make your pots

1. Everyone should make their own plant pot out of an unwanted item that is suitable for the plant they want to grow.
2. Everyone should cut their items down to size and make holes for drainage if needed. The best way to make drainage holes depends on the item and what it is made from – you could use scissors, a hole punch or a craft knife. Try using a screwdriver or sharp nail to make small holes. Put something like a block of wood behind the surface you're making holes in. Make sure an adult is involved to keep this step safe.
3. Everyone should line the bottom of their plant pot with gravel or stones to help it drain.
4. Everyone should fill their plant pot with compost, then put in their plants or sow their seeds.
5. Everyone should label their own plant pot, so they can remember what has been planted, and stand it on a tray or plate to catch water.
6. Everyone should make finishing touches: add labels to tell people what has been planted, draw symbols saying how much water or sunlight the plant likes, or find a way to hang the plant pot.
7. Everyone should take care of their plant or seeds by watering them when the soil begins to dry out.
8. Everyone should look after their plant as it grows. How does it change? What does it feel like? Does it have a smell? Is it ready to harvest or eat? The group could take photos or do drawings to explore the growth and change.



# Plant pot ideas

## Plastic bottles

Take the lid off and then use sharp scissors to cut the bottle down to size. These are great as hanging planters – just use a hole punch or nail to create some holes in the sides, and thread some string through.

## Fruit and vegetable punnets

Perfect as they are. You might even find these have ready-made drainage holes!

## Yoghurt pots

You could start small. These are great for growing from seeds.

## Punctured football or basketball

These can be used to make great hanging planters. Here's what you need to do:

1. Use sharp scissors or a craft knife to cut out a section of ball about two thirds of the way up so you can see (and plant) inside the ball. An adult should help with this.
2. Create a loop for hanging by make four holes equally spaced around the ball, about three centimetres below the rim. Thread strong twine or thin rope through to meet at the top and tie a knot.
3. Either hang the planter from a hook, or attach to a pallet, fence or wall with nails or tacks.
4. Try cutting slits in the sides of the ball so plants can poke out from all angles.



## Old shoes or trainers

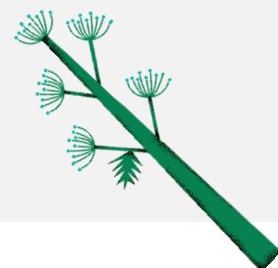
Remove any laces and pull the tongue out, to get as much potting space as you can.

## Old wellies

You'll probably want to cut the top of the welly off so you can reach right into it and your plant will get enough light. Check out our [video on growing with recycled planters](#).

## Can't we just recycle?

- Just because we've put something in a recycling bin doesn't necessarily mean it will be recycled. It relies on the recycling being processed properly, and if recycling is contaminated (if items haven't been cleaned), it may just be sent to landfill.
- The processing of recycling, to turn into it new items, will also take up energy. It might even be sent to other countries – it's thought that over two thirds of the UK's plastic waste is sent overseas.
- The recycling of plastics can also cause some problems. Plastics sent for recycling are shredded, melted down and turned into pellets, which are used to create new products. But these pellets are easily spilled and can end up back in our environment. They're a form of microplastics (pieces of plastic smaller than 5mm), and they can get into our oceans and harm the wildlife there.
- It's important to think about how we can reduce and reuse too.



## Environmentally friendly gardening tips

- Avoid non-native invasive plants if you're going to be planting outdoors. Learn more about this by running [Good thymes in the garden](#).
- Choose plants that are pesticide and peat-free.
- Choose seeds that are organically grown and not genetically modified.
- Choose peat-free compost or make your own.
- Try growing some wildflowers to help pollinators, like bees. They'll love flowers that have lots of pollen, like primroses and marigolds.
- Growing fruit or vegetables will reduce your food miles (the distance food travels before it gets to our plate – sometimes thousands of miles by aeroplane). Try growing tomatoes, strawberries, herbs, lettuce and cress.



## What's the problem with peat?

- Peat is a thick and muddy natural material that is really important for our planet. It's formed in bogs and it is created slowly over thousands of years, from partly decomposed plants.
- Peatlands provide a home to many species, and peat can hold 20 times its own weight in water, so it can help reduce risk of flooding. If it's dug up and sold for use in gardening, this damages these environments.
- Using peat-free compost is a small way we can help the fight against climate change and protect wildlife.

## Reflection

Time	Activity
5 mins	This activity was about valuing the outdoors by learning more about plants, and helping your community by preventing unwanted items from being put in the bin. How did it feel creating your very own piece of nature? What did you learn about what plants need to grow and thrive? What was it like giving an unwanted item a new life? Share items you have recently discarded and decide whether these could work as planters. Think big – anything from an old bathtub to broken blenders, wonky side tables or cracked drawers can make a new home for greenery.



## 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.

- **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.

- **Rubbish and recycling**

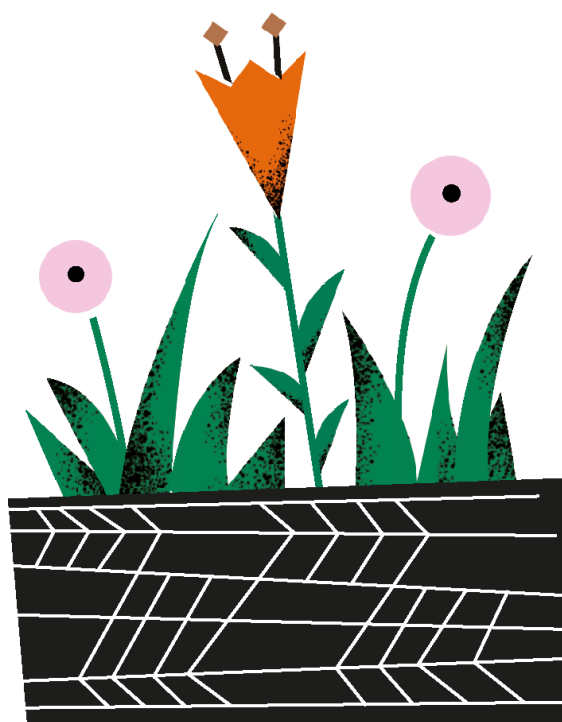
All items should be clean and suitable for this activity.

- **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.

- **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.



## Change the level of challenge

Keep it simple and use things like fruit punnets and yoghurt pots as ready-made pots. Or get more creative with things like old shoes or footballs. It's up to you how much detail you go into. Adjust it to fit your group

## Make it accessible

Adults can take a step back or get more involved depending on how people are getting on. Members of the group could also work in pairs and help each other.

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

## Take it further

Think how you can use the group's knowledge and skills to make a difference in the local community. How can you help everyone reuse, reduce or recycle? What green spaces could you create or help look after?

## Youth shaped guidance

Get everyone involved in choosing items to turn into plant pots, and what plants to grow.

