



Container Crops

Goals

Students will learn that plants can grow in other places than in the ground.

Objectives

Students will plant seeds/seedlings in recycled and reused items to create unique little gardens.

Materials

- Recycled/Reused containers (see examples below)
- Nylon screening (or plastic bags)
- Soil for potting
- Seedlings and seeds (parsley, chamomile, carrot, radish, etc.)
- Note cards and pencils (optional)

Time: 20 minutes

Advanced Preparation

Collect containers from thrift stores and community donations. Drill drainage holes in the containers unless you want the students to help poke these holes.

Background Information

Here are some ideas for containers for students to plant into:

- Worn out boots make perfect containers for miniature gardens
- Collect old tubs, barrels and cans for eye-catching planters
- Wash off old tires and use them as raised beds in the garden
- Make little window boxes for the children to take home near the end of the season
- Line an old hat with a plastic bag, fill with soil and you'll have a head-turning planter
- Fill a pair of worn work gloves with soil. Tack them onto a fence or post, and press four or five nasturtium seeds into the surface of the soil, and water gently

Introduction (5 min)

Have students turn to a partner and discuss: *What do plants need to grow?* Discuss their answers with the larger group. Have students turn to a new partner and discuss: *Where can plants grow other than in the ground?* Discuss these answers with the larger group and explain to the students that today they will be planting in creative containers.

Activity Steps (15 min)

1. Divide students into groups so that each group has a container to plant.
2. Cover the bottom of the containers with screening.
3. Have students fill the containers to the rim with soil.
4. Demonstrate planting the seeds/seedlings into the soil. Be sure to emphasize to the students that they need to be extra careful while handling delicate seedlings and small seeds. For very tiny seeds, you may find it best to give students a folded note card and

pencil. The seeds can rest in the crease of the note card and students can carefully push them onto the soil surface with the tip of a pencil.

5. Give students seeds/plants and allow them to plant their containers. Monitor their planting and provide guidance where it is needed.
6. Carefully water the container. Use a mist setting on the hose if you planted seeds to assure that the seeds do not wash away.
7. Tending your container garden takes about as much time as tying your shoes. Push your finger into the soil daily. Water if the soil feels dry. Observe frequently to notice growth. You may want to replant after harvesting vegetables that you completely remove from the soil, like radishes or carrots.

Conclusion (2 min)

Brainstorm with the group to think of other creative containers that could be used for gardening. You may want to create a list of ideas for next year, or have students write ideas in their journals so they can container garden at home.

Notes

