RECYCLE, GARDEN, REPEAT

Add some color into your life by planting flower seeds in recycled containers.
Recycle, Garden, Repeat

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About the Activity

Make the world a better place by recycling containers from around your home and using them to plant a flower garden. Beautify your balcony, porch, windowsill, garden bed, and landscape with colorful flowers. Flowers can even transform the side of the highway and help natural pollinators like butterflies and bees!

This activity is part of our 4-H At-Home Garden Series. See the rest of the activities here.

Supplies

These simple supplies are all you’ll need for this activity:

- Recyclable container
- Seeds and/or transplants
- Plant label
- Scissors
- Permanent marker
- Soil
- Water
- Optional: Crafts (paint, ribbons, stickers, etc.)

Grades: 3-8

Topic: STEM, Biology

Time: 30 minutes
Activity Steps

1. Find a recyclable container in your house. You can use an empty milk carton, a can, water bottle, egg carton, or a tire wheel... the choices are endless!

   **DID YOU KNOW?** A flower is the reproductive part of the plant, and they are designed to make not only fruits, but seeds. These seeds produce the next generation of plants!

2. If your recycled container once had food in it, make sure it has been washed with soap and water.

3. If you need to trim your container to size or add drainage holes in the bottom, use scissors to make any necessary cuts.

4. Pour soil into the container. Water the soil so that it is moist.

   **DID YOU KNOW?** The color, shape and even the smell of the flower attracts pollinators that travel from flower-to-flower picking up and leaving pollen behind. The flower needs to be pollinated to make fruits and seeds.

5. If you are planting seeds, poke a hole into the soil using your finger. Place a few seeds inside the hole, and gently cover the seeds with soil. If you have a transplant, dig a larger hole in the middle of your wet soil, and carefully take out the transplant out of its original pot. Place the transplant inside the hole, and gently cover the roots with soil.

6. Water your soil again to help with seed germination and root development. Place a plant label in the container so you don’t forget what you’re growing.

   **DID YOU KNOW?** Did you know that some flowers are edible? Some flowers you can eat include hibiscus, pansies, lavender and roses!

7. After the container is dry, decorate your recycle container with any craft materials you have such as paint and stickers!

8. Enjoy watching your plant grow. Don’t forget to water and give it sunlight!

   **DID YOU KNOW?** It takes so much energy for a plant to create flowers. What you want to do is to regularly “deadhead” flowers. Deadheading is a very important garden chore that involves removing flowers that have bloomed or are dead. It’s very good for the plants, so they can focus their energy on keeping themselves healthy by growing bigger!
Test Your Knowledge

See how much you’ve learned about plants!

QUESTION 1
Which part of the plant produces the fruits and the seeds?
   a. The stem
   b. The flower
   c. The leaves

QUESTION 2
What attracts a pollinator to a flower?
   a. The color
   b. The shape
   c. The smell
   d. All of the above

QUESTION 3
What is the difference between a fruit and a vegetable?
   a. Fruits tastes better than vegetables
   b. Vegetables are greener than fruits
   c. Fruits come from a flower, while vegetables comes from any part of the plant other than the flower

QUESTION 4
Are some flowers edible?
   a. Yes!
   b. No!

QUESTION 5
What is an important garden chore that you should do when taking care of flowers?
   a. Smell them everyday
   b. Deadheading
   c. Cutting the leaves off

Reflection Questions
Bonus questions to inspire wonder:

• Why do flowers need to be pollinated?
• Why is it important to recycle, reuse and reduce trash?
• What other recyclable containers can you use to plant your flowers in?
Investigate & Explore

Take your new knowledge to the next level.

All fruits come from a flower, but that cannot happen unless it was pollinated. Flowers provide food for our pollinator friends, animals and even humans. So next time you see a flower, see if you spot any pollinators!

Without plants, we could not live. Look around your house and see how many things around you are made out of plants.

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