

Garden recycling for fun!

Garden recycling with wellies, teapots and toilet rolls - some fun ways to get recycling in the garden: save money, reduce your waste and provide free entertainment for young green fingers!

Old boots and shoes Excellent flower pots (see above). If they are really well-loved they might even come with pre-made drainage holes!

CDs: String together old CDs or shiny bottle tops to keep the birds away from your fruit trees.

Egg cartons: A fun way to start off seedlings. Poke small holes in the bottom of the egg cartons for drainage, fill with a mix of compost and potting soil and then plant a few seeds in each one. The "lid" to the egg carton can be kept as a tray to catch water. These seed-pots can be re-used for new seeds, or you can cut them away and plant each egg holder directly into the garden. The cardboard will biodegrade.

Eggshells: Great for Easter holiday activities. Fill an eggshell almost to the top with good soil and spread cress, alfalfa or grass seeds on top, cover with a thin layer of potting mix or soil. Also works with cotton wool for growing cress. Draw funny faces in felt-tip pen on the eggshell. Leave in a warm, sunny place and lightly water it each day as the green hair grows.

Ice lolly sticks: Great plant labels for the veg patch.

Milk cartons: Help you water the garden without carrying around the watering can. Poke holes in the bottom sides of the carton, then "plant" them two-thirds of the way into the ground between garden plants. This will keep your plants slowly watered. Refill as needed.

Old tights: Stuff with old newspapers and stitch together to make limbs for scarecrows. Attach to a stake and dress with old clothes. You can also use strips of nylon tights to tie saplings to stakes.

Plastic bags: sturdy black bin bags, with a few drainage holes cut into the bottom, make great potato planters. Plant seed potatoes, about two inches into the soil you've put in the bag. Keep well watered and add more soil as the plants grow to keep the stems well covered. Continue watering and add soil as the plants grow until the leaves turn yellow/brown. Stop watering for a couple of weeks, then "harvest" by cutting the side of the bag open - you'll be amazed at how many tatties you can grow!



Plastic drink bottles: These have lots of different uses. Punch some holes in the bottom for a watering can, or cut in half to make bird feeders. Can also be used as planters if you cut the tops off and punch holes in the bottom. Or, cut the tops off and use the bottom to make a “greenhouse” for planter boxes.

Plastic Lids: These can also be used as “greenhouses”, plant seeds inside and use the lids to keep them warm and moist.

Rainwater “tanks”: Old containers can be left near drains or pipes to catch excess rain water, which can then be used to water your garden.

Used teabags: Brilliant for filling in gaps in your lawn. Sow grass seed on the top, making sure to keep it moist as the teabags will dry out quickly. Watch the grass grow and apply to your lawn as needed for a quick fix!

Teapots/ old kettles: Can make the cutest pot plants.

Toilet roll tubes: These make excellent root trainers for sweet peas, giving lots of room for their long roots. They also work for other seedlings and you can cut them in half to make two mini pots. You can plant these in the garden because the cardboard will disintegrate over time.)

Tyres: Next time you get new tyres, take them home with you to make great planters. Grow potatoes inside by spreading newspaper on the ground, stacking two tyres on top of each other, drill some drainage holes around the sides and fill with soil. Plant 4 or 5 seed potatoes and water. Keep the soil topped up as the leaves grow and you can even add another tyre or two, keeping the soil topped up as you go for a bumper crop. Create a tyre tower for herbs or strawberries, by stacking three or four tyres, filling with soil and cutting holes in the sides. Plant your herbs or strawberries in the top and sides and watch them grow.

Wheelbarrows: Fabulous, moveable flower beds. Punch some holes in the bottom for drainage.

Wildlife homes: Frogs love old pots and containers, especially near some water. Shallow dishes - either plastic or broken household ones - make good bird drinking and bathing spots.

Yoghurt tubs: Good for seedlings. Make sure they are washed thoroughly before using them and punch drainage holes into the bottom.



About the Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust

We work with communities, landowners & local authorities to make Edinburgh and the Lothians a greener, happier and healthier place to live and work. Our projects include the creation and improvement of woodlands, gardens and parks, working alongside community groups to develop, fund and carry out projects.



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