



Oregon State
University

Growing in Oregon Paper Pots



How to make paper pots

Paper pots are a fun way to recycle paper and can be planted right into the ground or into a larger pot.

1. Place the paper in a bowl and add enough water to cover the paper (warm water is best and you can always add more water). Newspaper should break down quickly, but let other types of paper sit in the water 1 to 2 hours or more.
2. Act like a blender! Mix and blend the paper and water by hand or with a fork until it is the texture of oatmeal or smoother and turns into “paper pulp.” Squeeze out extra water. (See photo #1.)
3. Take a handful of the paper pulp and drop it into your mold. Shape the paper pot by pressing the pulp against the wall and floor of the mold, tilting the mold on the side to help drain the extra water. Avoid thin spots.
4. Once the mixture is covering the walls and bottom of the mold, take a pen, pencil or your finger and make a small hole in the center bottom. Water will drain through this hole once the pot is dry.
5. Leave the pot to dry in a warm place. Check it the next day. If the pot is dry, take it out of the mold. If not, check the next day.
6. Once dry, fill the pot with soil up to about an inch from the top. Moisten the soil with water.
7. Add 3 seeds into a hole in the soil and cover. Also, if you have a seed packet, read the growing directions on it. If you wish, mark the pot with the type of plant and date planted, or make a garden marker. (See photo #2.)
8. Place the pot somewhere warm—if possible, around 70 degrees F. Once the seeds sprout, make sure the plant gets sunlight, too. To increase the warmth, top with plastic; for example, reuse a plastic bag by placing it over the top. (See photo #3.) Place a small plate or saucer under the pot to make it stable and catch water.
9. Water your plant lightly every day. Water into the soil, not on the leaves, to avoid mildew.
10. Once baby plants develop their “true leaves,” it’s typically time to transplant them to a bigger container or outside, if it’s warm enough! (See photo #4.)

What you’ll need



- ✿ Paper: torn newspaper or any color-free paper such as 3 or more sheets of 8.5 x 11 printer paper
- ✿ Bucket or bowl
- ✿ Water
- ✿ Mold: cup, coffee mug, bowl or other container at least 2 inches deep
- ✿ Soil
- ✿ Seeds – at least 3 per type – a few more than you plan on growing, because not every seed will begin to grow (germinate)

Paper pots are often used just for starting seeds, but if you want to grow your plants in the paper pots, make sure to make the pots 6 to 12 inches deep with thick walls!

Plant ideas	Pot depth
Chives, oregano, tarragon, thyme	6 inches
Basil, cilantro, parsley	8 inches
Rosemary, lettuce, spinach	12 inches

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Watch a video

www.foodhero.org/paper-pots.

How to make a garden marker

1. Rinse and dry an empty milk carton.
2. Carefully cut out one side.
3. Cut out a garden marker shape.
4. Use a marker or pen to add the name of the plant and the date planted.