



Oregon State
University

Growing in Oregon Up-Cycling

Tips for Reusing Household Items When Gardening

Containers to Grow Plants in

The deeper the better. A container at least 3 to 4 inches deep allows for better developed roots. Shorter containers are great for growing microgreens (<https://foodhero.org/microgreens>).

- ❁ Clean a berry, milk, cottage cheese, margarine, or yogurt container, or 2-liter bottle and carefully cut the top off if needed. When cutting, leave as much container for the roots as you can. If the container does not have a drainage hole, carefully poke one or more holes in the bottom using a ballpoint pen. To fully grow plants in them, make sure the pots are tall enough for the root size of the plant. For example, half-gallon milk cartons are better used sideways (horizontally) for shorter roots, and upright (vertically) for longer roots. Lettuces and most herbs, like basil, can grow in short containers at least 3 inches deep.
- ❁ Use a toilet paper roll (folded in at the bottom to hold soil), when you start seeds indoors to transplant outside later. It can be planted straight into the ground when the plant is transplanted to the garden.
- ❁ Start spring garlic in a glass jar (<https://foodhero.org/garlic>).
- ❁ Make a paper pot to start seeds in (<https://foodhero.org/garden-tip-sheets>).
- ❁ Plant herbs in a colander. You can hang it and place another plant underneath to let water drain through and water the plant below.
- ❁ Plant a garden inside an old dresser drawer. Carefully drill drainage holes into the bottom.



Plant Markers

- ❁ Old milk jugs make a weather-hardy material for plant markers. Carefully cut out the shape you want. Using a permanent marker, label it with the plant name and planting date.

Plant Protectors

- ❁ Make a plant cover out of a gallon milk jug. Carefully cut off the bottom of the jug and place the top over an outside plant to protect it from the cold. The same can be done with the top of a 2-liter bottle for smaller or younger plants.
- ❁ Use an old cloth, such as a bed sheet or even a scarf, to cover your plants and protect them from pests, cold temperatures or midday sun.



Plant Saucers

- ❁ Plant containers should have drainage holes. Plant saucers will catch any water that drains through. Some ideas include plastic lids from larger containers such as yogurt containers, kitchen plates, or the bottom of a gallon milk jug.

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