

Upcycled Plastic Bottle Self-Watering Planter



DIY Instructions

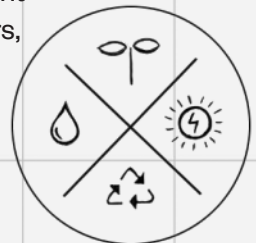
This easy DIY planter is ideal for starting seeds to be transferred to a larger pot later, or you can use it indefinitely to care for smaller plants or an indoor herb garden.

Materials Needed

- One plastic bottle. 2 liter is ideal.
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- Cotton string, twine, or strips of an old shirt (Make sure the material is cotton so that it properly absorbs the water)
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- Potting soil
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- Seeds
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- Scissors
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- Utility knife
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- Optional: Art supplies of your choice to decorate the planter

Step-by-Step Guide

1. Clean bottle completely and remove label (use vegetable oil to remove excess adhesive).
2. Carefully puncture the bottle at the halfway point of its height with a utility knife and using scissors, cut all the way around the bottle until you have two halves. The bottom half will serve as the water reservoir and the top half will hold your plant.



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3. Drill a hole in the bottle cap about $\frac{1}{4}$ " in diameter.
4. To make the wick, use 3-4 strands of cotton string or cloth measuring about 6" each. Bundle the strings together and tie them with a knot about 2 inches from one end.
5. Remove the bottle cap and thread the short end of the wick through the hole you drilled. Put the cap back on and ensure that the long end of the wick is on the inside of the top half of the bottle.
6. Invert the top half of the bottle so that the spout rests inside the bottom half of the bottle. Check that the wick is long enough to touch the bottom of the water reservoir half of the bottle and adjust the knot as needed.
7. Optional Step: At this point, you may decorate the outside of the planter using paint, stickers, tape, or any material of your choice. Get creative! Add a decorative label with the name of the plant or herb if you're making multiple planters.
8. Fill the top about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the way with potting soil. Spread out the strands of the wick and continue filling with soil up to about 1" from the top.
9. Follow the planting instructions for your choice of seeds and lightly water from the top just once to settle them in.
10. Fill the bottom half of the bottle with about 3" of water. Your self-watering planter is now complete! Keep an eye on the water level and refill as needed.



UIC Greenhouse



The UIC Greenhouse is a key player in keeping the UIC campus diverse, not only plant life, but in collaborations around Chicago. Partnerships with The Field Museum of Natural History and numerous UIC organizations like the Department of Biology, Heritage Gardens, and Project Green Flame allow for a wide range of plant research to thrive.

Open to the student population, the UIC Greenhouse offers free tours and tips on plant care. Don't miss out.

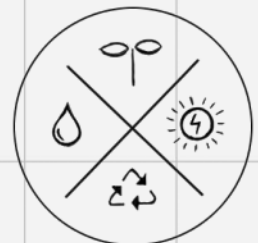
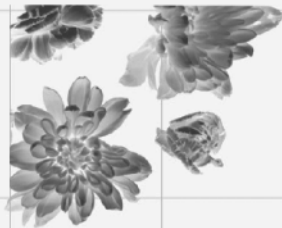
Vick's Plant (*Plectranthus tomentosus*)

Plant Type: Succulent

Life Cycle: Perennial

Environment: Indoor and Outdoor (>40 degrees F)

Sun Exposure: Full to Partial



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Tips

Water when soil is dry to the touch or if plant looks wilted.

Signs of overwatering

Browning or yellowing of leaves

Leaves falling off

Uses

Congested? Crush leaves and steep in hot water for some decongesting aromatherapy.

Rub or crush together and rub on skin to repel mosquitos.

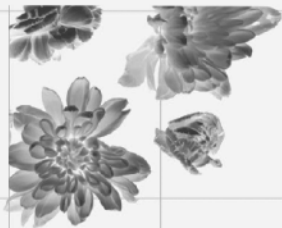
Visit the UIC Greenhouse

1020 S. Union Ave

Chicago IL, 60607

Corner of Halsted St. and

Taylor St.



Cooking With Pea Shoots



Use them as base for or as a garnish on top of a salad.

Use them in place of lettuce or bean sprouts on your favorite sandwiches.

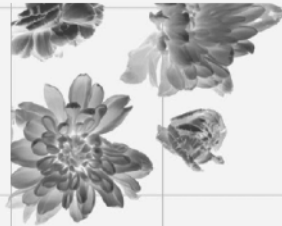
Stir fry them with some garlic and oil for a quick side dish.

Use in place of spinach or other greens in pasta dishes.

Pea Shoot Pesto

- 1 small garlic clove smashed
- 4 oz pea shoots, coarsely chopped
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup cilantro leaves
- 3 tbsp fresh lime
- 3/4 cup grated parmesan cheese
- Salt and pepper

Mix all ingredients in a blender and use immediately.
Pesto can be stored in the refrigerator for up to a week.



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Planting Pea Shoots

Soak seeds in water for 24 hours before planting if possible.

Plant in a flat, wide and shallow tray with lots of drainage.

Sprinkle seeds on top of the soil.

Plant them densely and water lightly.

Place under light for at least 8 hours a day (a windowsill will work).

The shoots are ready when they are green and about 8 inches tall.

Harvest

Use scissors to harvest your greens leaving a little bit near the bottom.

Pea shoots will regrow so you can enjoy them all winter long.

If not eating immediately, cut pea shoots can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.

Store in a loosely wrapped paper towel and open plastic bag.

