

Upcycled Self-Watering Planter: A Guide

Gather Materials

- 2 liter bottle (or any other size)
- Scissors or knife
- Un-dyed cotton string
- Drill or hammer and large nail (optional)
- Growing medium - well drained soil or potting soil mix
- Seeds
- Water

PREPARATION & PLANTING

Clean and dry your bottle

- Rinse it well and let it dry in the sun for 1-2 days

Cut the bottle in half

- Using scissors or a knife, cut your bottle in half

Poke a hole in the cap

- Using a drill, hammer and nail, or the tip of a knife, carefully make a hole in the center of the bottle cap (about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch diameter)

Create a 'wick'

- Cut 4 equal lengths of string (6-inch pieces)
- Knot them together 1-2 inches from one end of the strands
 - One end should be long enough to hit the bottom of the base
- Insert the wick into the cap, short end down, and replace the cap
- If you have lost your cap, you can use a small piece of tape to secure the wick to the inside of the neck of the bottle.

Fill your planter

- Place the top half of your planter into the bottom half, cut side up
- Holding the long end of the wick, fill the planter about halfway or until the string is about $\frac{2}{3}$ covered
- Separate and distribute the strings evenly in the planter
- Finish filling, leaving about a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of space at the top

Water

- Remove the top half of your bottle and fill the bottom with $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 inch of water, avoiding submerging the bottle cap in the water
- Replace the top of the planter, ensuring the ends of the string sit in the water

Plant

- Sow a small number of seeds (2-5) on top of your growing medium
- Cover with a very thin layer of soil and dampen using a gentle stream of water or a spray bottle
- Label your planter with your herb and planting date

Plant care

- Place the planter on a sunny windowsill or table. 8+ hours of light daily is ideal, though 6 will do for most plants.
- Until your seeds germinate, you may find watering from the top to help keep the soil damp is helpful. You can also cover the soil with a paper towel or cloth to help it maintain moisture prior to germination.

- Once germinated, the seedlings' roots, paired with the string wick, should absorb water from the bottom of your planter.
- Refill the water in the bottom of your planter once it is completely dry for the duration of your plant's life. It's OK to allow the soil to dry out a little before refilling as well - especially if you have any trouble with fungi or damping off.
- Harvest will depend on what you plant.
 - For most herbs, harvesting small quantities often is best. This helps stimulate new growth.
- Transplant outside: If you're growing a perennial herb you can transplant it outside after the chance of frost has passed. In Greenville, that's usually mid-March. In these kits, the oregano provided makes for a great ground cover - it's low growing and hardy.