

MAKING YOUR OWN SEED POTS

There is no better way to raise your seeds than in pots and seed trays that you have made yourself from recycled and biodegradable materials. Some can be planted along with your seedlings, where they will decompose and help feed the soil as they do so. They are also fun to make with children and take only a few minutes—less time, in fact, than a visit to the garden center to buy commercially produced pots.



Cardboard rolls from paper towels are the perfect size for germinating seeds.

ROLL OVER

Possibly the easiest seed pots you will ever make, the cardboard rolls inside toilet paper and paper towels are perfect for deep-rooted seedlings, such as sweet peas (*Lathyrus odoratus*) or green beans. You can use rolls from toilet paper whole and cut those from paper towels in half. Pack them in a rigid container, as they tend to wobble a bit and may lose some of their structure when wet. Fill with seed-starting mix and sow seeds. The cardboard is biodegradable and can be planted in the ground or a large container.

082 | 083 REDUCE, REUSE, AND RECYCLE



Food cans with drainage holes in the base make eco-friendly seed pots.

HATCHING SEEDLINGS

Cardboard egg cartons make excellent ready-to-use, biodegradable seed trays, and the eggs themselves can also provide a home for seeds. If you are partial to a boiled egg for breakfast, do not discard the shells. Make a small hole in the base with a skewer, fill them with potting mix and sow one or two seeds into each shell. You can plant the

shells along with their seedlings, but crack them carefully first so that the young roots are able to escape more easily. As the shells decompose, they release calcium, an essential plant macronutrient that is needed for building cell walls. It also helps maintain a healthy chemical balance in the soil.

Sowing seeds in eggshells avoids plastic and feeds developing seedlings.



YOGURT PLANT POTS

Plastic food containers of many types can be upcycled into seed trays and pots. Yogurt containers are particularly useful—the small types are ideal for individual seeds, while the larger containers are perfect for potting on seedlings. Clean the pots thoroughly

in hot soapy water first to remove all traces of food. Heat up a kitchen skewer and use it to make two or three drainage holes in the base of each yogurt container; then fill with compost and sow your seeds or transplant your seedlings.

Small yogurt pots are convenient for sowing individual seeds.



MAKING POTS FROM NEWSPAPER

These eco-friendly seed pots are fun to make with children. You can use newspaper, comics, or magazines, but avoid embossed paper, which may contain plastics or harmful chemicals. Use your pots for large vegetable seeds such as beans or cucumbers and annual flower seeds, including cosmos, annual dahlias, zinnias, and calendulas. Do not leave the pots in a tray of water, as this may cause the paper to decompose too quickly.

YOU WILL NEED Newspaper, comic, or magazine paper • Small can or glass jar • Scissors

- 1 Flatten a sheet of paper then fold it in half lengthwise so that you have a rectangle comprising two layers of paper.
- 2 Lay a small glass jar or drink can on its side and place it on one end of the folded paper. Roll the paper around the jar or can a couple of times.
- 3 Fold the newspaper at one end over the bottom of the jar or can to form the base of the pot. Carefully remove the newspaper pot and stand it up on a table.
- 4 Trim the paper at the top so that the pot is the height you want it, plus about ¾ in (2 cm). Fold this excess paper inside the pot to secure it. You are then ready to fill your pot with seed-starting mix (see p.51) and sow your seeds.



TOP TIP SOW JUST ONE OR TWO SEEDS INTO EACH HOMEMADE PAPER POT SO THAT YOU WILL NOT NEED TO TRANSPLANT THE SEEDLINGS INTO LARGER CONTAINERS BEFORE TRANSFERRING BOTH POT AND PLANT INTO THE SOIL OR POTTING MIX.

