

Crafty garden ideas



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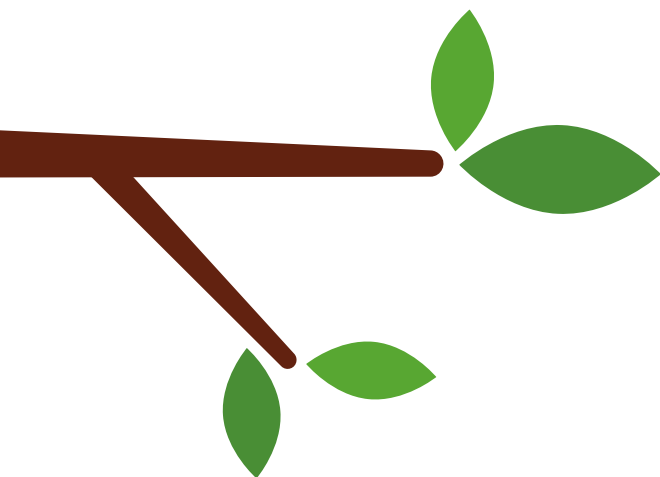
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Bring a little extra greenery to your home with this guide. Learn how to build a bird feeder from a bottle, grow strawberries on your windowsill, or grow mint both indoors or outside.

These crafty garden ideas are both simple and fun, and ideal to help to entertain kids during the holidays.

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Build a bottle bird feeder

Welcome birds into your garden by following these few quick and easy steps to building your very own bird feeder.

What you need:

- Plastic bottle (approx. 500ml)
- 2 pencils
- Knife or scissors
- Wire or string
- Bird feed - try and go for a mix of flaked maize and sunflower seeds.
- A grown-up to help you



1 Holes for the perch

Make 2 holes in the bottle, opposite each other, roughly 4 cm from the bottom of the bottle.

You'll want the pencils to fit nice and securely in their place - the birds will thank you for it.

Pierce 2 more holes in the bottle, slightly below the other holes and again opposite each other for the second pencil.

2 Fitting the perch

Feed the two pencils through their holes at 90 degree angles.

3 Feeding holes

Pierce small holes above the perches so the birds can reach the seeds. The holes should be slightly larger than the size of the seeds.

4 Fitting wire or string for hanging

Pierce two holes at the top of the bottle, beneath the lid, Thread the wire or string through the holes.

5 Inserting bird food

Remove the lid of the bottle and insert the bird feed.

6 Hanging the bird feeder

Tie the wire or string around a tree branch or a washing line. Keep the bird feeder as high off the ground as possible so the birds can feed safely.





A strawberry window garden



For those who live in an apartment or a flat, a window box or even hanging basket is a great way to bring the garden to your windowsill.

Strawberries are incredibly easy to grow and can be grown almost anywhere. The best time to plant strawberry seeds is early autumn. Plants should be planted between the end of June and September.

What you need:

- A window box or plant pots
- Potting compost
- Gravel or pebbles
- Strawberry seeds or strawberry plants



1 Preparing the window box or plant pot

Using the biggest window box or plant pot you can for your windowsill, add a layer of gravel or pebbles to the bottom, around 3cm deep. This helps with drainage. Make sure that the box is fully secured to the windowsill.

2 Adding the compost

Fill your box or pots with compost so that it sits around 4cm below the top for seeds and 5cm for plants. Pack the compost and press down on it lightly. The compost should be slightly moist but not wet.

3 Planting your strawberry seeds

Spread the seeds out evenly along the edges of your box or pot.

Place the plants around 1.5cm away from the edge of the box or pots. Ideally, strawberry plants are placed 35-40 cm apart in a plant box or one per pot.

4 Add more compost

Top up the compost so it's roughly 3cm from the top of the box or pot. Firm up the soil around each plant as you spread it out.

5 Watering the seeds or plants

Water new plants and seeds frequently. Water from the bottom to prevent rotting the crown and the fruit.



How to grow mint



Mint is easy to grow and can be grown both indoors and outdoors. The fun thing about growing this herb is that you can grow it in a variety of different containers: teacups, old sinks or even an old bathtub.

Why grow mint?

- You can plant it all year round
- It will grow all year round - especially if grown indoors
- It can be grown indoors, on a windowsill or outside

What you need:

- A box, plant pot or a container of your choice - with drainage holes
- Potting compost
- Gravel or pebbles
- Mint seeds or mint plants
- A fork or trowel
- Plant saucers or anything that will catch excess water



1 Preparing your container

Fill your box, pot or container of choice with compost.

Try and fill compost to a depth of roughly 25cm before planting. Use a garden fork or trowel to loosen and mix the soil.

2 Planting your mint

If you can, plant them 40cm apart. If you're using a small pot or container, use one plant per pot.

3 Where to place your plant

Mint plants love sun but they also like a bit of shade. Place it so that it gets both sun and shade.

4 Watering your mint

Your mint plant prefers moist soil. Keep it well watered but don't overdo it. Place plant saucers beneath to catch excess water.

5 Harvesting your mint

Mint is a very fast growing herb. Pick the leaves at any time by pinching off stems, or to harvest whole stems cut them roughly 3cm from the top of the soil.

To make things more fun, why not grow a plant each and see which grows the quickest?



Tips for watering plants

Regular watering of plants is essential for getting your plants to grow. It's a great way to engage your children in gardening from an early age and get them to take on responsibility. It's also important to teach the values of reducing water waste.

Outdoor plants

If it's a sunny day, make sure you:

- Wear a sun hat
- Use suntan lotion

When to water:

All year round but mainly May - September

The best time to water plants is in the evening or early morning when it is cooler so the water doesn't evaporate in the heat.

If you notice your plants are wilting then water them as soon as possible.

Water your plants at their base so it soaks the roots.

Top tip

Try and avoid watering plant leaves in direct sunlight - this can scorch the leaves.

Indoor plants

Need to know

Most house plants die because they are over watered.

Water the soil so it is moist - water below the plants, directly into the soil.

Place plant saucers under the plants to catch the excess water.

Don't forget

House plants can survive for a few weeks if you water them properly before you go on holiday. If you can, move plants into bigger pots so you can feed them more water before you go.

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For more tips and information on looking after your home and garden, visit our guide pages [here](#).

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