



Garbage Gardening with Kids

Garbage gardening with kids is a fun, inexpensive, way to teach children where our food comes from and interest them in participating in their health via the food choices they make. This also supports the concepts of recycling, reusing & reducing. Look in the recycle bin for some of the following items that can be used to grow your “Garbage Gardening Plants.”

Containers

Seed starting

- Egg cartons
- Salad mix containers lined with a half sheet of a paper towel
- Toilet paper or paper towel rolls cut in half or thirds
- Newspapers rolled into tubes

Water suspension rooting

- Saucers, shallow bowls, clear plastic fast food cups or emptied jars

Well-draining pots for garbage gardening with plants or seeds

- Margarine, yogurt, or any clean plastic food container with drainage holes in the bottom
- Fast food beverage cups with holes in the bottom
- Large or small paper milk containers with holes in the bottom

Additional items needed for this project:

- A good potting soil – Commercial potting soil or make your own.
- Adequate light and moisture

Once new leaves begin to show, your garbage-growing plants require bright, indirect light.

The basic rule of thumb for your garbage garden is to keep it moist.

Veggie starts and seeds like moist soil and high humidity, which can be increased by covering the planted veggie starts or seeds with plastic wrap or putting them in a plastic bag.

Garbage Gardening Plants – Now for the fun part!

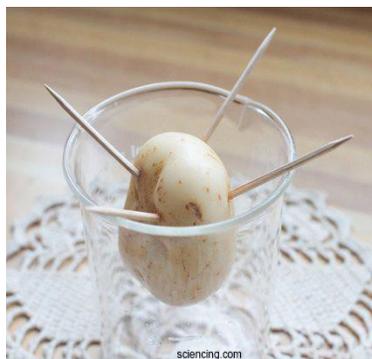
Keep in mind that some of your garbage garden experiments are just that, experiments, and may require tweaking conditions several times to attain an actual plant.

Methods for Growing Plants from “garbage scraps”

1. **Water Glass Suspension** – This method works well with avocado pits or sweet and white potatoes. All you need for this project are pointed tooth picks, a clear glass or plastic container, water and patience. The chosen vegetable suspended in a container of water by 4 toothpicks spaced evenly around it, will sit on a sunny window ledge, and sprout.
2. **Growing Plant Tops** – You can try this method with root crops, such as carrots, turnips, beets, as well as non-root vegetables like bok choy, celery, cabbage, lettuce, garlic, green onions, and lettuce, make a great garbage garden project for the kids. You will need a saucer or shallow container with pea gravel or very coarse sand and water or just a small shallow dish with water. Place the vegetable, cut side down, on top of the pea gravel or in the water. Add a little sunshine and the end results are beautiful, ferny leaves sprouting

3. **Planting cut-off portions of produce** - Pineapple tops and sprouted potatoes 'eyes' can be planted directly in the ground.
4. **Planting Seeds** – Try your gardening thumb at planting raw peanuts, uncooked popcorn, and even dry beans. Seeds from vegetables purchased for the family's consumption can be saved and planted using containers headed for the recycling bin or directly in the ground.
 **Many plants are hybrids and as such will not bear the same veggies or fruits of the parent plant, but they are still fun to grow nonetheless.

Growing White Potatoes in Water



Growing a potato is fun, since you can practically watch it grow before your eyes.

- Stick four toothpicks into the sides of the white potato, arranging them so they stick out all around the middle.
- Insert the wide end of the potato into the clear plastic cup so the toothpicks rest on the rim of the cup.
- Add enough water to the cup to cover just the bottom of the potato.
- Place in a dark, cool place. Leave it there for 1-2 weeks to allow the eyes and sprouts to grow.
- Now put the white potato in the cup near a sunny window. You should see shoots and growing roots. Allow the potato to

continue growing, adding water when needed, or transplant to soil when you like.

Sweet Potatoes in Water



- Find a glass container that is slightly larger in diameter than your tuber. You want some space but no more than an inch.
- Insert four to six round, pointed end toothpicks into the middle of the tuber at equidistant intervals.
- Place the tuber, pointed end down, in the jar so the toothpicks are supported by the top rim.
- Fill the jar with water until the bottom three inches of the tuber is covered.

Uses for Sweet Potato Sprouts/Vines

- Sweet potato vines won't develop tubers when grown in the above manner, but they can be used as an indoor plant.
- The leaves are edible and can be cooked, dressed or sauced as you would kale and spinach.
- You can also suspend the rooted slips in an aquarium, where they will remove nitrates and waste materials from the water.
- Or plant them outdoors in a large pot or in the ground.

Regrow Green Onions in Water



- Cut the onions leaving about 1-2 inches of white bulbs with the roots INTACT
- Rinse the whole onion gently under running water to remove excess dirt
- Place in a small cup and add just enough water to cover the onion roots, leaving the bulb out of the water
- Leave the cup near a window with a light source to promote growth
- Pour out the old water and add new tap water every 2-3 days or when the water discolors.

As the green onion tops grow, you can cut them for eating or after a few weeks, you can replant the green onions in soil to give them more nutrients and harder plants for eating.

Growing Celery in Water



Celery is one of the easiest vegetables to propagate at home since you only need a jar or glass of water and a cutting. Use the heart of the celery plant with the cut bottom intact.

- Cut 2-3 inches off the celery stalk above the root base and insert toothpicks around it to keep the celery from touching the bottom of the bowl. Place the cut edge facing up in the bowl covering 1 inch of the root base with water.
- After a few days, you should start seeing small leaves emerging from the very center of the top. In about a week, you may see small stalks and leaves, and tiny roots emerging around the base.

It is essential to note that celery cannot fully grow in water. For the best results, when the new roots are about an inch long, you should plant the celery in potting soil or directly into your garden.

Growing Carrots in Water



- You will need carrots, beets or turnips with the tops intact and about 2 inches of the root portion.
- Fill a saucer or shallow container with pea gravel or very coarse sand and water. Then place the carrots, or celery root, cut side down, on top of the pea gravel.
- Add a little sunshine and the end results are beautiful, ferny leaves sprouting

Excellent for tossing into salads, make pesto or add to your green juices.

This water method can be used to grow many other vegetables.

Bok Choy - Simply cut off leaves at the bottom of the stalks and within a few days, new growth will appear.

Cabbage - Cut the bottom of the head off, & place it in a shallow bowl with a small amount of water. Don't let the leaves get too big, they'll taste better when small.

Fennel - Cut the stalk down to about 1-2 inches tall, leaving the roots intact. Place in shallow bowl with water.

Garlic - Place a small garlic bulb that has started to grow a green shoot into a shallow bowl of water. Within a few days, you'll be enjoying fresh garlic chives which can be used to flavor food. They are similar in size and shape to scallions, and can be prepared the same way.

Leeks - Place the bottom section of the stalk, about 2-3 inches long, into a bowl with water. It will re-grow the center portion of the leek.

Lemon Grass - Plant the same as you would a leek. Remove all but 2-3 inches of the stalk, place in about 1/2 inch of water and watch it regrow from the center.

Lettuce - Remove the bottom of the head, leaving it about 1-3 inches long. Place that into a shallow bowl with water. It will regrow small lettuce leaves in the center.

How to Root an Avocado Seed



- With the broad end of the avocado pits pointing down, stick several toothpicks around the center of each avocado seed. The toothpicks will make it so that only the bottom one third to one half of the avocado pits will be in the water.
- Place the avocado seed, broad end down, in the glass of water and set it in a location where it will get plenty of sun.
- Be sure to keep the water at a constant level. Eventually, you will see the avocado seed growing roots.

Sprouting avocado pits in glasses of water will allow the children to see how an avocado tree will grow from a pit.