

# Milk Carton Garden



AGES  
5 to 10

This fun, hands-on activity is the perfect way to welcome spring and help your child learn about growing food.

## Supplies:

- Milk carton (237 mL, 1 L or 2 L)
- Dish soap and water
- Permanent marker
- Ruler
- Scissors
- Potting soil
- Seeds that grow in shallow containers such as beans, peas, green onions or herbs
- Wooden craft sticks
- Spray bottle

## Instructions:

1. Prep your container!
  - Pour a small amount of dish soap and water in the carton, close it and shake. Pour out the soapy water and rinse well.
  - Use a ruler and a marker to draw a line about 3 inches (7.5 cm) from bottom of the carton (see picture on next page).
  - Help your child poke a hole along the line on the carton. Insert the scissors through the hole and cut along the line, removing the top of the carton.
2. Scoop potting soil into the carton and slowly add water to the soil until it is damp. Mix the soil with your fingers.
3. Let's plant! Check the package directions to learn how deep you should plant your seeds. Use fingers to poke holes in the soil and place the seeds into the holes.
4. It's time to label your plants! Write the name of the seed on a wooden craft stick and place it in the soil. Your child could also attach a drawing or the picture from the seed packet.
5. Find a sunny spot for your milk carton garden. Use a spray bottle to mist the soil twice a day.

# Cutting the Milk Carton

Use a ruler and marker to draw a line to guide cutting. Use tip of scissors to poke a hole along the line of the carton. Cut to remove the top of the carton.



# Expand Learnings at Home

## Connect Through Conversation

Ask your children open-ended questions as you do this gardening activity together.

- What do plants need to live? Discuss how they need soil, water and sunlight to grow.
- How does reusing and recycling items help care for the environment. What other items are reused or recycled at home? Think about reusable items that could replace some single-use items.
- Talk about other ways to make a positive impact on the environment, like reducing food waste at home. For example, you could freeze fruit and veggies that are over-ripe and use them in your smoothies.

## Explaining the Science

- Seeds get a signal to start growing when they are planted in moist soil. This is germination.
- The seed will develop roots, which grow down into the soil in search for water and nutrients. The roots help the plant stay upright as it grows.
- The outer layer of the seed splits and a shoot grows toward the surface. The seedling appears, breaking through the soil. The seed has now sprouted.
- The seedling grows leaves. The leaves begin to make food for the plant using sunlight, water and air.
- The plant will continue growing, producing vegetables, fruit or flowers.

## Activities for Extra Fun!

### Involve your kids in choosing seeds

- Talk to your local garden centre or do research online to choose your seeds.

### Take notes on the growing process

- Invite your child to use the chart on page four to record what they notice about their plant. They could measure how much the plant grows each week and record the number and size of leaves.
- Invite your child to draw or paint pictures of the growing stages.

### Transplant your seedlings outside

- Move your plant outside to a garden or larger container after the weather warms up and the risk of frost has passed. Your plant will need some time to adjust to being outside, so do a little research before transplanting it.

# My Plant's Growth Chart

Notice how your plant is growing. Record things like first sprout, first set of leaves, height or changes in the size of leaves.

Name of Seed Planted:

Date Planted:

Date	What I Notice

