

How to Make a Self-Watering Plant System

Materials:

Plastic water bottles with cap, rinsed and labels removed
X-acto knife or sharp scissors
Twine
Potting soil (damp)
Seeds or Seedlings of your choice
Water
Optional: liquid fertilizer

Instructions:

1. With the help of an adult, cut the water bottle into unequal halves, with the bottom half being larger.
2. Unscrew the bottle cap, and cut a small triangle or make a small hole in the cap. Reattach the cap.
3. Cut the length of twine so it reaches into the bottom of the bottle, threading it through the hole in the cap and tying it so the knot sits in the bottom of the cap.
4. Fill the bottom half of the bottle with water and a little fertilizer, if using. Then, place the top of the bottle upside down, so it makes a little cup and the twine dangles into the water. Make sure there is some twine in the top half of the bottle and twist it so it sits around the edge.
5. Wet the twine, then add the damp soil. If using a seedling, add the seedling to the cup then loosely cover with soil. If using a seed, space two seeds slightly apart in the center of the cup.
6. You now have a self-watering plant system! Place the container in the sun and watch your plant grow! Make sure to refill the reservoir when it gets low, and repot the plant once it gets bigger.

A self-watering plant system works through the process of capillary action. The twine acts as a wick, allowing water from the reservoir to travel up to the cup and provides moisture and nutrients directly to the roots of the plant. It is also an easy way to recycle water bottles that may be laying around, and an easy activity to do with your kids!

*Download and print
this sheet on cardstock
and cut out your own
plant labels!*

