



ELINOR WONDERS WHY

Grow Seedlings in an Egg Carton

30 min activity

Growing seedlings in an egg carton is a great way to teach your child about plants.

It's plant day at school and Elinor and her friends can't wait to get their own plants! They learn that plants come in many different shapes and sizes - some grow tall, some have big leaves, some have flowers, and some even have prickly thorns or spines. And when Elinor and her friends get to know their plants better, they find out that some plants only need water once a week while other plants need water every few days. Each plant is unique and special!

Go on a walk and look for different types of plants in your neighborhood or look for plants in books or online. Talk about the plants you find. *What do they look like? Are they growing in a sunny spot or a shady spot? Do they have thorns or flowers?* Now think about a plant you might like to grow.

Research what types of plants might grow well in your yard or home. Consider starting with an easy to grow plant like cucumbers or radishes. Then try this activity to raise your plant from seed to seedling.

Materials

- Cardboard egg carton
- Scissors
- Potting soil
- Seeds
- Water
- Spray bottle
- Garden trowel
- Large planting pot (optional) or outside planting location

Directions

- 1** Cut a cardboard egg carton in half. An adult should supervise or help young children with this step.



- 2** Add potting soil to the individual egg cups in the carton. Have your child use one finger to create a hole in the center of each cup. Place one seed in each hole. Cover with soil. Spray the soil and newly planted seeds with water.
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3 Place the egg carton on a tray and keep it in a warm light-filled location indoors until the seeds begin to sprout. Remind your child to water the seeds every day or as directed on the seed package. The soil should stay very moist.

4 Once the seeds have sprouted into small seedlings, you and your child can transfer them to a permanent location outside. Before planting your seedlings, it's a good idea to take your tray outside to get the seedlings used to being outdoors. You can start by taking them outside in the shade for a day or two before transferring them into the ground or larger pot. Be sure to talk to your child about what you're doing with your seedlings and why.



Make sure the egg carton is very wet and saturated before transferring the seedling to its

5 new outdoor location. Tear or cut off one of the egg carton cups.



6 Use the trowel to dig a hole in the container or ground garden where you are transferring the seedlings.



7 Place one egg carton cup directly in each hole. Fill in the hole around the egg carton with a little more soil if needed, but be sure to leave the seedling uncovered so that it can get sunlight and water. The cardboard egg carton cup will eventually decompose leaving just the plant.
