

NATURE ACTIVITIES

CREATIVE FLOWER POTS

Have kids? Check out this project that involves creating flower pots from recyclable material and painting terracotta pots with pour paint and freestyle techniques!

PART ONE - CREATIVE REUSE PLANTERS

Do you have recyclable containers waiting to be picked up at curbside pickup? Here is an activity making flower pots from reusing Play-Doh containers, but any container in a general shape of a flower pot should work. Be creative, see what you can find!

Resources/materials needed: Recyclable Containers with lid, decorative tape (Washi, masking, duct tape, etc.) tape, stickers, markers, awl, scissors, glitter glue, school glue, large paint or foam brush, gardening gloves, trowel, potting soil, plants or seeds, and water

Skills: Cognitive, Motor Skills, Environmental Appreciation, Creativity, Self-Expression, Imagination, Hand-Eye Coordination, Technical Skills, Observation

DIRECTIONS:

Step 1: Pick your containers! These can be yogurt, play dough, and other lidded containers. Wash and dry before use. Make sure these are your own containers to ensure safety.

Step 2: An adult should use an awl, nail or the end of scissors to puncture a few small holes in the bottom of the container for drainage.

Step 3: Give children an array of patterned and colored tape as well as stickers to choose from. If you only have access to plain masking tape, welcome the kids to color on the tape with markers and crayons with their own designs. They should have kid friendly scissors if they are old enough to cut the tape as they go. If you have young ones, pre-cutting or ripping tape and providing stickers would work well for this project.



Photo Credit: Messy Little Monster



Photo Credit: Projects with Kids



Photo Credit: Projects with Kids

Step 4: The kids should have fun creating designs on their flower pots! Encourage creative expression and even cutting shapes out of the tape to stick. Let them choose where to apply the tape and stickers.

Step 5: Once they are done decorating with tape, it is time to waterproof the outside if you plan on keeping it outdoors. You can apply school glue with a brush with a thin coat. If you do not wish to waterproof it, you can skip this part and start decorating with glitter glue and/or markers. Let dry completely before the next step.

Step 6: Bring out the potting soil, plants and/or seeds! Start by placing the lid of the container underneath the container like a plate. Fill the container 1/2 full with potting soil. If you are planting seeds, you can fill it pretty much to the top leaving 1/2". You can use your hands, wooden spoon, hand trowel or any other tool you can think of to transfer the soil. A couple seeds can be planted in each container depending on the size and then transplanted later.

Step 7: Make a indentation that will fit your plant's roots. Place your plant of choice into the container and cover the rest with soil. This should come to at least 1/2-1" from the top of the container. If you are using seeds, make small holes 1/4"-1/2" deep (depending on what seed package says) with the back of a wooden spoon, stick, or your finger. Cover holes with a layer of soil. Water so the dirt is moist (with a spray bottle for seeds). Continue to water regularly and put in a sunny location to grow! (Depending on the directions for the particular plant. It may flourish in semi-sun or shade.)

Related Ideas: If you have a lot of seeds and recyclables such as egg cartons, you can make seed starters out of those as you create more planting pots. Egg cartons provide an excellent sized space for individual seeds. Follow the directions for seeds above. Transplant when seedlings are close to growing out of the container.

Reflection: What planting that you didn't know? What did you like the most about the process? Which flower pot that you designed do you like the most? What patterns and colors work the best together? Do your plants seem happy in their new pots?



Photo Credit: Projects with Kids



Photo Credit: Projects with Kids



Photo Credit: Projects with Kids

PART TWO - PAINTED TERRACOTTA POTS

Want to do some painting with your kids and even work on your own painting skills? This activity is all about making colorful compositions on terracotta pots. Self-expression is encouraged!

Resources/materials needed: Terracotta flower pots, craft or acrylic paint, brushes, water, paint mixing surface (paper plate, wax paper, etc), and rag or paper towel

Skills: Cognitive, Motor, Hand-Eye Coordination, Environmental Appreciation, Creativity, Self-Expression, Whole Brain-Development

DIRECTIONS:

Step 1: Gather terracotta pots of all sizes! Prepare a painting station by putting newspaper, an old table cloth, or a piece of cardboard down to protect the table. Provide paint of different colors. Colors can be mixed, so if you want a lighter blue for example you can add white to a dark blue, or if you want a green mix yellow and blue. Having a mixing surface such as wax paper, parchment paper or a paper plate is ideal. Recyclable plastic containers work well too. Have a cup of water to wash brushes and rags or paper towels handy.

Step 2: Look at the empty surfaces of the terracotta pots. Decide what you would like to paint onto it. You can make a preliminary drawing plan or you can go for it. Kids prefer the direct approach. What colors do you need for what you want to paint? Pour small areas of paint on the mixing surface and encourage kids to mix their colors taking only a little bit of the original tube color at first and mixing on a separate plate. This keeps too much of the paint from being wasted and mixed into brown. Unless brown is a color they definitely want.

Step 3: Finish up on the paintings, share with one another and let dry. After the paint dries, you may choose to go back in for another coat or to add more details. Discuss what you like about each painted pot.

Kid's Reflection: Talk about your experience. What colors mixed together into what color? Were there any challenges? What story is your painting telling? Do you know what plant you want to plant in it? What do you enjoy about painting?



Photo Credit: Brentwood Public Library



Photo Credit: Projects with Kids



Photo Credit: By Stephanie Lynn

PART TWO - POUR PAINT PLANTING POTS/ TOAD ABODE

Want a sensory nature activity for kids? This is a hands-on activity focused in experiencing colors mixing together via pouring paint on terracotta planting pots.

Resources/materials needed: Craft paint in bottles. (It should be a liquid and not thick like some acrylic paints), large piece of cardboard, piece of wood or old baking rack, masking tape, Modge Podge or school glue, brush, potting soil, small trowel, seeds, plants, gloves

Skills: Cognitive, Motor, Hand-Eye Coordination, Sensory, Color Mixing, Creativity, Environmental Appreciation

DIRECTIONS:

Step 1: Set up this project by placing a large piece of cardboard on the ground outdoors. Place a plank of wood such as a 2" x 4" or an old drying rack on top of it. Put masking tape on the holes at the bottom of the terracotta pot.(from outside and inside) Place pots on the wood or rack upside down. The bottom with the covered hole should be the top at this point.

Step 2: Bring out the paint! The mixing of the colors will happen on the surface of the pot as gravity works together with the paint. Have at least 3 different colors to observe the reactions and mixing. Instruct your child to pour from the top each time experimenting with a small amount of paint and a more generous amount. Let dry totally when done.

Step 3: After the pot has dried, you have the option to weather proof it with a layer of school glue or Modge Podge before going to the planting/Toad Abode stage.

Step 4: It is time to decide what plants to plant in these pots or if you would like to make one as a Toad Abode. If you are planting, please refer to the instructions on page 2, steps 6 & 7.

If you are creating a Toad Abode, you will need to find a shady space in your garden or flower bed. Dig a slight depression so when the pot is on its side it will stay put. Place the pot there and a small amount of dirt for the toad. It's now ready for a toad to call home!

Kid's Reflection: Talk about your experience. Did you enjoy the sensory experience of the color mixing and digging in the soil?

Resources:
bystephanielynn.com/2015/06/drip-paint-flower-pots-terra-cotta-toad-house-kids-craft.html
messylittlemonster.com/2017/02/DIY-pour-painting-flower-pot-kids-craft.html



Photo Credit: By Stephanie Lynn

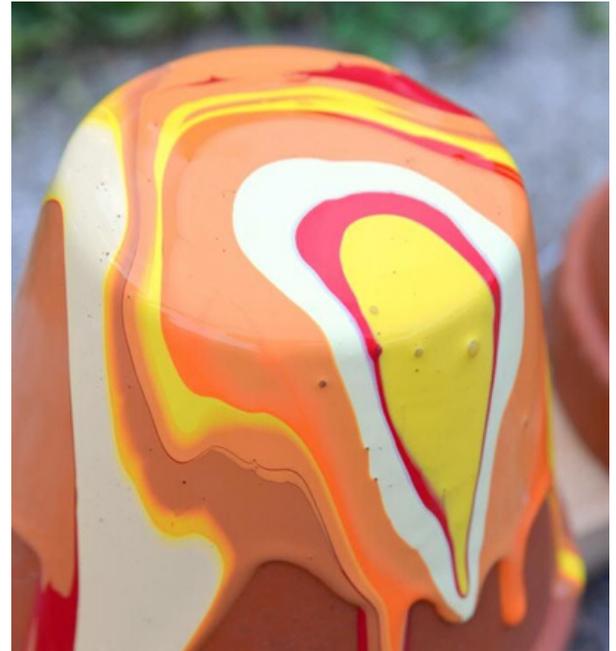


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craftinvaders.co.uk/bark-rubbing-exploring-trees/
artforkidshub.com/teaching-kids-how-to-draw-from-life-how-to-draw-a-tree/
paintingvalley.com/tree-color-drawing#tree-color-drawing-28.jpg
brentwoodlibrarymo.org/event/kids-craft/
projectswithkids.com/mini-plant-pots/