



# The Sunflower Jar

The most important element of any experiment is a caring adult. This activity is appropriate for a child who has exchanged asking “why” for asking “how.” “How do plants grow? How do plants in the woods get started? How do the stores get all that food?”



Place wet paper towels in a glass jar. Paper towel should be placed loosely, not packed down.

Position 4-6 seeds against the insides of the jar so they can be seen. The number of seeds depends on the size of your jar. The sprouts will need room for roots.

Place your sunflower jar in a window for light.

Water daily with a spray bottle or sprinkle water lightly with your hands. Keep the towels a moist place for the seeds.

In a few days sprouts from the seeds will appear. Then come roots. When the sprouts have two leaves and are two inches tall, you can plant them in a pot.

## What do children learn from the activity?

- How materials absorb water
- What plants need to grow
- Plants are delicate when they are young
- Measurement

### Materials:

Glass jar or smooth plastic container

Paper towels

Water

Packet of seeds



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# Potting your sunflower sprouts

## Materials:

### Pots for each sprout

Recycled plastic bottles or cups make fine pots for sprouts. An adult should cut the bottle to about 4 inches tall and make 3 to 4 holes in the bottom for drainage. Holes should be smaller than a pencil barrel.

### Old dishes or bowls for each pot

Container can be recycled plastic or glass

### Shovel

You can use the top half of the bottle as a shovel to collect your soil if it is strong enough.

### Soil

Soil can be collected from your own yard or a nearby wooded area. Take enough soil to fill your pot(s) and the shovel.

### Pebbles

Collect a handful of pebbles or small stones.

Put about one inch of pebbles or small rocks in the bottom of the pot.

Fill the pot about half full of soil and press it down.

Add loose soil to fill the pot and make a hole with your finger big enough to fit the sprout roots without crowding them.

Prepare all your pots before you take the sprouts out of the jar. Remove the paper towel and sprouts and gently separate the sprouts from the paper.

Place one sprout in the pot and gently fill the rest of the soil into the pot. Press down gently.

Slowly add water until it drains out the bottom of the pot. (You will not need to water this heavily again.)

If the soil level goes down, add more soil to within ½ inch of the top.

Sunflowers need full sun to grow. Place your plant in a very sunny window or a safe place outside in the sun.

When your seedling is too big for its pot, move it to a larger one or make a mini garden in your yard.

### Extend the experience

Place a stick or dowel in the larger pot and measure the plant's growth. Keep a log of the growth. Sunflowers can grow from 2 feet to 12 feet tall!



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