

# Fun With Plants

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## Balloon Plants

large, clear balloons      markers      ribbons      funnels  
measuring cups      towels or wipes      radish seeds  
1/2 cup potting soil (per student)      1/4 cup water (per student)

1. Hold a balloon firmly by the neck. Use a funnel, and pour 1/2 cup of soil into the balloon. Don't turn the balloon over.
2. Keep holding the balloon by the neck. Add about 1/4 cup of water through the funnel. Be sure the soil in the balloon is damp but not too wet.
3. Use the funnel to drop the radish seeds into the balloon. Don't turn the balloon over.
4. If the balloon is dirty, clean it with the towel or wipes.
5. Now you're ready to blow up your balloon. Keep holding it gently by the neck. Now carefully blow up the balloon. You need to keep the balloon from tipping.
6. Tie a knot in the neck to keep the air in the balloon. Tie a ribbon around the knot.
7. Hang the balloon from a hook or other place near a window. The neck should be the top. The balloon plant will begin growing soon.
8. Check your balloon daily and chart the plant's growth for 10 days.

Discuss: Could these plants grow in the balloons forever? Will they run out of anything? Where do plants get food? Where do plants get carbon dioxide? Do plants need water to live?

## Carrot Baskets

untrimmed, plump carrots with leaf stalks still attached.  
vegetable peeler  
toothpicks  
string

1. Cut the carrots from the leaf stalks, and trim the leaves from the stalks so that only the stalks and a one-inch cap remain on each one.
2. Use the pointed end of a vegetable peeler to carve out the center sections of the carrot caps. This will be the water hole.
3. Discuss safety rules by showing what safety procedures you followed as you prepared the carrot caps.
4. Show the students how to place the toothpicks opposite one another in the sides of the carrot caps. Explain safety rules for using the toothpicks.
5. Have students tie one of the strings to each of the toothpicks to make a hanging basket. The strings should be tied at a central meeting point to make a stronger holder.
6. Hang all the baskets in a sunny window, and have students keep water in the hollowed out carrot caps until new leaves appear.

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# Sneaker Salad

clean, old sneakers    lettuce and radish seeds    potting mix

1. Fill sneakers with potting mix.
2. Sprinkle a few lettuce and radish seeds in each sneaker.
3. Water.
4. Wait for the seeds to sprout.

For variety, use larger seeds, like bean, watermelon, squash or pumpkin.

# Garden Glove (Sprouting Fingers)

surgical gloves    yarn    cotton balls    beet, radish, lettuce, and carrot seed

1. Give each student a glove, and have each student write his/her name on the thumb of the glove and the names of each of the seeds on the remaining fingers.
2. In each finger, place a moistened cotton ball and a few of each kind of seeds.
3. Have students tie off their gloves with the yarn.
4. Wait for the fingers to sprout.

# Very Hairy Caterpillar

large bowl    4 cups potting medium    4 T ryegrass    bobby pins    googly eyes  
empty yogurt container or paper cup with bottom cut out (for funnel)  
one knee high stocking for each student    colorful ponytail holders    pipe cleaners  
pom poms    glue sticks

1. Combine the potting soil and ryegrass in the large bowl.
2. Slide a knee-high stocking over the funnel.
3. Pour or spoon 3/4 to 1 cup of the soil mixture into the stocking.
4. Slide a colorful ponytail holder over the end of the stocking to section off the pocket of soil.
5. Repeat Step 3 to make five soil-filled segments.
6. Tie a knot in the top of the stocking, and trim away excess nylon.
7. Submerge the caterpillar in water for 10 minutes
8. Place the caterpillar in a plastic bag, and let it sit overnight.
9. Remove the bag, and loop a semistraightened bobby pin through the front of the stocking.
10. Glue a a googly eye onto each end of the pin.
11. For antennae, cut a pipe cleaner in half, glue a small pom-pom onto one end of each half, and stick them in place.
12. Set the caterpillars on styrofoam plates near a sunny window, and generously water them every other day. The critters should sprout hair in about 4-5 days.

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