

Topic: pollution and environmental conservation

Recycled Paper Seedling Pots

http://www.madaboutsience.com.au/store/index.php?main_page=page&id=54

It's easy to forget that making paper consumes trees and energy. These recycled paper-pots are not only fun to make, but they give new life to old catalogues and newspapers - reducing waste and helping the earth... Raise a seed in your new eco-pot, then, when it's time, plant the seedling – pot and all in the garden – no need to worry because the pot's biodegradable and will break down quickly in the soil. Suitable for kids aged 5+ with adult supervision

CAUTION This experiment requires the use of hot water.

What you need:

- Cup, yoghurt container or bowl to mould your pot
- Newspaper, or other scrap, used un-wanted paper
- Large bowl or container to hold soaked paper
- Fine sieve
- Potato masher, or mortar and pestle
- Hot water
- Potting mix and seeds

What to do:

1. Tear scrap paper into very small pieces and soak in hot water for at least 3 hours. The longer the better, ideally leave the paper to soak overnight.
2. Pour off excess water and mash up the paper with a potato masher, or a mortar and pestle - even a metal spoon if you don't have anything else. You want a pulpy, liquid consistency.
3. Fill your pot-mould (cup or container) with the pulped-liquid paper using a spoon.
4. Tip the pulped-paper out of the mould and into a sieve. Press as much water out of the paper-mush as possible.
5. Put the drained paper back into the pot-mould, and use your fingers to press the paper into the sides of the mould and hollow out the centre. You're making the shape of your final pot.
6. Place the mould on a window sill or other sunny place so your paper pot can dry. It about a week you'll have a finished paper seedling pot.
7. Fill the pot with potting mix and plant some seeds. In time, plant your seedling and pot in the garden. The post will eventually decompose.

What else can you make out of recycled paper?