

SCIENCE/MATHEMATICS/LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITY

Garden in an Egg Carton

Children use an egg carton and eggshells to plant seedlings and compare how they grow.

What You Need

- paper/cardboard egg cartons
- empty eggshells
- potting soil
- plastic spoons
- bean seeds
- water
- poster board
- markers
- rulers

What to Do

1. Ask students what a seed would need in order to grow in an egg carton. Gather responses. If students disagree on what is needed, set up the egg cartons in different ways to let them test their ideas.
2. Remove the tops from an appropriate number of egg cartons.
3. Clean out and halve some of the eggshells.
4. Students will plant some seeds directly in the carton sections and some seeds in the same number of eggshells. Have children decide how much soil to put in each section and eggshell and talk about why they think that amount of soil would be appropriate. Avoid telling them what is right or wrong—instead, let them try different setups if different students disagree.
5. Have each child take a seed and plant it in the soil. Keep track of where each seed is planted. Place the egg cartons in a location where there is plenty of light, and have children water the seeds regularly.
6. Make a chart to track the growth of each plant. Children can write notes and take measurements as their seedlings grow, compare the plants grown in the cartons and those grown in the eggshells, and compare situations where seeds didn't grow and talk about why.
7. As a bonus, invite interested children to write a story or put on a play about planting seeds.



ACTIVITY TIPS

- When the seedlings are about 2" tall, they can be transferred into larger pots or into a garden.
- If the plants are being planted outdoors, they need to first be acclimated as the strength of the sun is significantly greater than what the plants will be used to, so put them outdoors for increasing periods of time over the course of a week before planting them into the ground.
- The seedlings grown in the carton can remain in the carton sections when they are transferred to a larger pot or outdoors. The carton will decompose and fertilize the soil.
- For the seedlings that are started in eggshells, when transferring them into a larger pot or outdoors, first gently crush the outside of the egg so that the plant roots can push through into the surrounding soil. Both the eggshell and the carton will decompose and provide nutrients for the plant.
- Seeds of herbs also work well.