

## How To Grow Plants In A Jar Of Water

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Oh, those wonderful mason jars. They have so many uses besides just preserving your food, and this one is one of my favorites. We've started plants from cuttings like this forever, but now it's becoming the "cool" thing to do.

Well guess what? It's a responsible, easy way to grow your own food even if you live in an apartment.

And often you don't even have to mess with seeds if you can get a start from another plant! That's because if cut properly, most plant stems will grow their own roots if placed in water. It takes some time and patience but growing plants in a jar of water is a great way to start plants on the cheap, and in the quantity that you need.

Plus, nobody will even know you're [growing anything](#) unless they come in your house.

### Why Grow Plants in a Jar?

I ran into the quantity problem last spring. I wanted to start a little container garden so I bought some pepper and tomato seeds. I had no idea how many of the seeds were going to grow because I picked them up at a discount store. So, I planted the entire pack. I knew better, but was overly enthusiastic.

I ended up with way more than I needed and spent a ton of money on soil just to have all but two of the plants die with the little old lady next door unintentionally killed them by trying to "help" me. Moral of the story – I didn't do what was best for my situation.

I just wanted a couple of tomato and pepper plants. I should have gotten some clippings from a friend and rooted them myself. Lesson learned, and here we are, growing plants in a jar.

Another advantage is that you don't have to mess with soil and starting seeds, and all the time-consuming steps that go into that process. These are pretty much just a matter of clipping them, setting the jar up properly, putting the clipping in, and sitting the jar in a window where it will get sun. Easy peasy. And you don't need a [lot of space](#) to grow these herbs and plants.

Almost all of the things related to houseplant death are eliminated because most of them are caused by over or under watering, or fungus and bacteria that grow in the soil. All you need to do is refill the water as needed.

## HOW TO MAKE A SELF-IRRIGATING PLANTER WITH USED YOGURT CONTAINERS *By Yumi Sakugawa*

**YOU WILL NEED...** (REMOVE TIN FOIL!)

- 2 QUART-SIZED YOGURT CONTAINERS (IDEALLY ONE SLIGHTLY SMALLER THAN OTHER)
- 1 8oz YOGURT CUP
- ONE STRAW OR PLASTIC TUBE
- BOX CUTTER
- DRILL
- POTTING SOIL AND SEEDS

- IN THE SLIGHTLY SMALLER QUART-SIZED YOGURT CONTAINER, CUT A HOLE AT THE BOTTOM THAT IS LARGE ENOUGH FOR THE 8 OZ YOGURT CONTAINER TO FIT HALFWAY UP.
- CUT THE BOTTOM OF THE STRAW OR PLASTIC TUBE AT A 45° ANGLE. DRILL A HOLE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE QUART-SIZED CONTAINER AND STICK THE TUBE THROUGH SO THAT IT STICKS OUT OF THE TOP + BOTTOM. (THE ANGLED END SHOULD BE AT THE BOTTOM.)
- PUNCH HOLES ALONG THE SIDES OF THE EXPOSED BOTTOM HALF OF THE 8 OZ YOGURT CONTAINER. ALSO PUNCH TINY HOLES ALONG THE BOTTOM OF THE QUART-SIZED CONTAINER (BUT NOT TOO BIG; YOU DON'T WANT DIRT TO FALL THROUGH THOSE HOLES.)
- NOW PLACE THE QUART-SIZED CONTAINER WITH THE STRAW AND THE 8 OZ YOGURT CUP INTO THE SLIGHTLY LARGER QUART-SIZED YOGURT CONTAINER.
- DRILL A SMALL HOLE JUST BELOW WHERE THE TWO CONTAINERS MEET. THIS HOLE IS TO ENSURE THAT YOU DON'T OVERWATER YOUR PLANTER. (LIKE RIGHT HERE)
- FILL THE INNER CONTAINER WITH POTTING SOIL. MAKE SURE THE 8 OZ YOGURT CUP INSIDE GETS FILLED. MAKE SURE THAT NO DIRT GETS INTO THE STRAW/TUBE.
- TIME TO ADD WATER TO YOUR SELF-IRRIGATING PLANTER! USING A FUNNEL AND/OR A WATERING CAN, POUR WATER INTO THE BOTTOM RESERVOIR THROUGH THE TUBE STICKING OUT OF THE DIRT. (YOU WILL KNOW YOU HAVE ADDED ENOUGH WATER WHEN WATER COMES OUT OF THE OVERFLOW HOLE.)
- FOLLOWING THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THE SEED PACKETS, PLANT SEEDS INTO THE SOIL. UNTIL THE SEEDS GERMINATE, WATER THE SOIL BOTH AT THE TOP AND THROUGH THE TUBE. ONCE THE SEEDS HAVE GERMINATED, REGULARLY KEEP THE INNER RESERVOIR WATERED.

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Finally, they take up very little space and are absolutely adorable and earthy sitting around your house or kitchen.

## What Plants Grow in a Jar?

Well, the quick answer to that is – all of them. Or at least most of them. But what should you grow? That's the real question. Because of balance issues, you need to keep the size of the adult plant in mind when making your choices. Basil, yes. Banana tree, no.

Keep in mind that there are many different sizes and shapes of jars. For that matter, who says it has to be a jar, per-se? Any clear glass container will work. The important part is that the roots are covered, the plants are supported, and the appropriate amount of sunlight is available.

If that means I'm growing my tomato plant in a gallon jar or even jug or bottle, then so what. A bottle is actually nice because it provides support for the stalk or stem.

Neat trick – put rocks or sand in the bottom of the jar or container to weight it down, thus allowing it to support a heavier or bulkier plant without tipping over.

Generically speaking, plants that are smaller grow best in mason jars, since that was the topic of the day, but there's always room for making do with what you want.

## How to Get Started Growing Plants in a Jar

This is the hardest part of [growing hydroponic plants](#) this way, and it's not hard at all. If you're crafty, you'll find it to be fun. I like it because I often choose things to put in the jar that are decorative as well as functional. The idea is that the jar needs to be weighted and, in some instances, it doesn't for the roots to have something to grow into for stability.

Mind you, this isn't a necessary step for plant growth, but I do it for the reasons above, Start by choosing your medium – pebbles, beads, marbles (my particular favorite), colored glass beads, sand ... whatever you fancy that's waterproof, non-toxic, and has some weight to it. Put that in the jar, either in the very bottom or as much as half-full. Just make sure you leave room for the plant!

Add a piece of charcoal in – it doesn't even have to be visible – just to help keep the water clear.

Next, mix some water with water-soluble diluted plant food/fertilizer. It's best to go with about one-third what the bag recommends since there's no soil to obstruct it. Obviously, shoot for something that's clear. Unless you'd like a blue tint to your water, which may actually be pretty. I use an organic hydroponic mix.

Now all you need to do is add the cutting. Plants vary, but usually it's best to go 8 inches or so back from the tip of the stem and cut it at an angle right above a joint. Trim off all but the top two sets of leaves – the plant needs these to photosynthesize. Put the bottom half or so of the plant in your jar and set it in a sunny windowsill. That's it!

Don't become impatient. It'll take a while for the plant to grow a healthy root system – weeks. You should start seeing some little hairy sprouts starting from the tip of the stem in a week or so, though.

So, what plants are you going to grow? Here are some suggestions for herbs. You can investigate others that you may be interested in growing, too. This method works for decorative plants, too. It's how I start all of my vines. There's still a beautiful strand of morning glories that are flourishing at the

house that I lived in last.

## Plants that Grow Well in Jars

- Peppermint – grows best in partially sunny or shady spots
- Oregano – can grow large, so plan accordingly by using plenty of weight in the bottom
- Sage – doesn't need a ton of water, keep it in moderate sunlight
- Basil – needs 6-8 hours sunlight
- Stevia – a great natural sweetener that grows well in sun or shade
- Thyme – great in a variety of dishes and has medicinal uses, too. Needs plenty of sunlight
- Rosemary – a [medicinal herb](#) as well as delicious. Grows well in sunlight or partial shade but better in full sun
- Lemon balm – used for relieving anxiety, aiding digestion, and improving sleep. It needs plenty of sunlight
- Chives – great in many dishes for a light, fresh, mild onion flavor. Needs lots of water and sun

Growing a plant in a jar of water is easy, neat, and pretty. They look great as decorative pieces on your dining room table if your kitchen is sunny, or anywhere else where light is available. Some plants need less light than others, so grow according to what you have the conditions for.

The handful of plants I've listed are just the tip of the iceberg – you can grow pretty much whatever you want if your jar is big enough!

Have you grown plants in water? If so, we'd love to hear about your results, and learn from any tips, so tell us about it in the comments section below.



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