

EARTH DAY UPCYCLED FLOWER POTS

In celebration of Earth Day and Eldergrow's anniversary, residents will use "upcycled" materials to make a compostable planter gift, planted with nasturtium flower seeds.

Please amend this lesson to adapt to the abilities and interest of your residents. You know your residents best!

If you don't have a garden, you can still interact with nature by collecting other bits of nature during a garden courtyard or walk. You can also safely enjoy nature from a window!

Wellness Objectives:

1: Resident will engage cognitive stimulation (CS)

2: Resident will engage socialization (S)

3: Resident will engage motor skills (MS)

Eldergrow offers a **therapeutic connection** to nature where residents engage in meaningful ways – cognitively, socially, spiritually, emotionally, & physically.

MATERIALS:

Budget:\$6-10



- **DIY Paper Pot:** use Newspaper (nonglossy) paper bags, or craft paper
- **Gift wrap for pot:** Recycled decorative wrapping paper, paper bags, craft paper or fabric (like old dish towels, worn table cloth, etc)
 - **Review-** newspaper pot making tutorial: [Link here](#). To use for outer package gift wrap. (Collect or find at Dollar or thrift store)
 - **Other options-** recycled paper outer wrapping instructions: Easiest: [Link here](#), A more challenging version: [Link here](#)
- Nasturtium seeds (Dollar store or [Link here](#)) and/or rooted cuttings (Save leftover seeds for future lessons.)
- An unopened small can or plastic cup to form paper pot shape
- Tape, scissors, notecard paper, glue stick & twine
- Plastic containers with lids (ex. yogurt or cottage cheese)
- Organic potting soil (box store or [Link here](#)), save leftover for future.
- Paint (*try colors that match nasturtiums*), notepad paper, brushes, green pen/pencils for drawing stems, sharpies
- Paper towels
- Gift card templates (cut/fold over and glue): Last 2 pages of this lesson. Or paint "fingerprint flower gift cards" (See Daily Programming)
- **Talking Points:** "Nasturtiums" & "Earth Day" (on Nature Connect portal)

Photo source: Delineateyourdwelling.com

PREPARATION

- If you have a garden, have residents gather around it, or at table by a window with a view of nature. Have journal ready for garden/nature observations.
- **Watch our short video** on the Nature Connect portal for tips & tricks on this activity.
- Set out materials and **Talking Points**.

ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS – CHOOSE 1 OR ALL 3 PARTS:

1. GARDEN OBSERVATIONS & CONVERSATION:

If you have a garden, gather around it so residents can make observations, or gather around a window. These are way to connect with nature. Skip ahead to #2 for the Lesson Plan.

- Bring safe scissors for leggy plants and garden tools, journal with pen, and half full watering can (keep it light).
- Jot down 3 things in the journal (or ask for a volunteer resident to be today's garden/nature secretary)
- Bring a ruler & have residents measure plants. Mark their heights in the journal & observe their growth over time!
- Do you notice anything different or new about the garden? There are no wrong answers.
- How does the soil feel - Too wet? Too dry? If too dry, ask a volunteer to water.

2. CONVERSATIONS ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY:

- Take turns reading “**Earth Day**” **Talking Points** aloud. *What are ways we can help the environment?* (shorter showers, recycle cans, walk more, etc.)
- Let's learn about the flowers/herbs that we will be planting today in sustainable paper pots! Take turns reading “**Nasturtium**” **Talking Points** aloud.

3. CREATING EARTH DAY PAPER POT GIFTS:

Watch our short video on the Nature Connect portal for tips & tricks on this activity.

- **Creating Paper Pots with Newspapers**
 - Take a half sheet of newspaper and fold lengthwise. (See video instructions on first page.)
 - Lay flat on table and position jar/can at one end, leaving 2 inches of the paper's edge overhanging it. Roll the newspaper tightly around the can to the end. Fold bottom in & press firm to make the base.
- **Planting Your Seeds**
 - Moisten soil in large bowl until it feels damp but not soggy – like a wrung out sponge.
 - Fill paper pot with moist soil 3/4 full (can use a spoon). Use your finger or stick to make a shallow hole.
 - Place 2 seeds in the hole and gently cover with soil. Water them in lightly with cute mister.
 - Place paper pot in plastic yogurt or cottage cheese container.
 - Follow directions for outer wrapping instructions (listed in "materials") section.
- **Caring for Your Plant**
 - Place wrapped pot in a sunny window or garden on a plastic lid or tray. Check moisture level every few days and gently mist as needed. Sprouts should appear in 7-10 days.
 - After 2-3 weeks you can plant outdoors (keep plant in the paper pot as it will compost into soil).
- **A Few Things to Consider**
 - Newspaper ink is soy-based and non-toxic, making these planters safe for even for edible plants.
 - Your pot may begin to grow mold. This could be a sign of over-watering.
- **Making Fingerprint Nasturtium Flower Gift Cards (or cut out/glue/color the template cards at end)**
 - Help residents decide for whom they'd like to make this gift.
 - Put red, yellow and orange paints on a plastic lid. Draw green stems coming up from the bottom of the card. Residents dip their finger into each color to dot flower petals and leaves at top of stems.
 - Allow gift cards to dry as you create the pots. (Consider decorating outer wrapping paper as well.)

CLOSING & AMENDMENTS FOR DIFFERENT LEVELS

Have your **garden / nature journal ready** to write down resident **comments, garden, or activity highlights**.

- Encourage participation of a high acuity or low vision resident **with hand support assistance** – or have them hold your wrist as they create the paper pots, pour water into the soil, stir the soil, use the cute mister or scoop the soil into the paper pots.
- Perhaps your activity is more of a "**Demonstration Class**" where you have a volunteer resident as your "lovely assistant" helping with those parts that require more fine motor skills and then take the project around the room for those parts that others can help with.
- Some residents may not want to put their fingers in paint. Consider having them wear gloves, or you can make the fingerprint flowers for them to just **add green stems to**.
- **Assist as minimally as possible** to the particular resident's ability. This way it's a collaboration that plays to the resident's strengths, allowing them to be successful and fulfilled with what they can do! This may require you to ensure a staff member can work with that particular resident during the activity so they are still included and supported.
- Changes in the garden can help **stimulate short term memories**, so do encourage residents to make these observations as well as reflect back on previous observations so they can see how their garden is changing over time, including future growth of their new herbs and flowers.
- Some like to **write a "plant of the day"** on a chalkboard or piece of paper for residents to read about in the future (and to use when creating the plant label). Consider adding a couple of noteworthy aspects of your choice plant for them to continue to learn and remember about their garden's plant collection.
- Hang the **Talking Points** around the room or on the garden as **reminders of the fun activity**.
- **Assist residents with walkers or wheelchairs** to make nature observations, and tend to plants. If a resident can't make it to the garden, bring the garden or cuttings to them!
- **For something a little more challenging for IL participants**- Try the pot wrapping option, or come up with your own "up-cycled" planting pot from something around the community that can be used as a container and decorated. Check the recycling bin!
- Give everyone a round of happy applause for a job well done!

To: _____

*In Honor of Earth Day, this April, I
created this flower pot gift,
using re-useable materials, just for you!*

*After this flower seedling starts
to grow, please plant the
earth friendly paper pot in your garden.*

*When you see the nasturtium blooms,
remember that I'm thinking of you!*

From: _____

Happy Earth Day Gift for You!

Nasturtium: what's edible?

Seeds

Strongest flavor. Can be eaten raw, although they are most often pickled (ending up like capers). Use young pods that are still green & soft. Mature yellow seed pods have a very hard seed inside that tastes bad.

Leaves

Both big and small leaves are edible and have a hint of bitterness that other parts don't have

Flowers

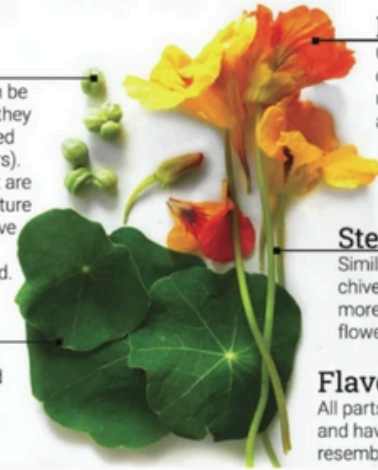
Come in a variety of colors and can be used to dye vinegar and other infusions

Stems

Similar texture to chives with a bit more 'bite' than flowers and leaves

Flavor

All parts taste very similar and have a peppery 'bite' that resembles a radish



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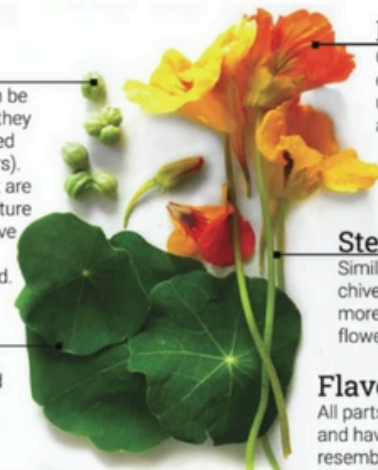
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*When you see the nasturtium blooms,
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