

## DIY Planter

Want a way to brighten any mom's day for months to come? This very special present makes a great pick-me-up, and kids can construct it in a flash! Mother's Day falls close to the start of growing season, so it's a perfect time to give Mom a seedling of her own. Constructing this handmade planter provides a great opportunity for your child to investigate nature as he creates an imaginative and artistic gift. And, since it's made from a recycled milk carton, this pretty planter is earth-friendly, too.

### What You Need:

- Small (school lunch sized) milk carton that has been thoroughly washed and dried
- Tempera paint
- Paint brush
- Construction paper
- Clear drying, non-toxic glue
- Tissue paper
- Potting soil
- Flower seeds
- Gardening gloves
- Scissors



### What You Do:

1. Choose one of Mom's favorite plants (or one that she may like based on color or fragrance). Carefully read the instructions on the seed package to ensure that it is acceptable to start the seedling in an indoor planter.
2. Open the top of the milk carton all the way around, and then thoroughly wash and dry the carton. If the top is jagged or has tears, simply cut around the top to make it a smooth, even line.
3. Ask your child to paint the outside of the milk carton with tempera paints. Help her choose colors that correspond to the flower. Use the seed package or a photo from a plant life book as a guide.
4. Set aside to dry. This is a great opportunity to talk about why flowers are different colors. Start with a question such as, "What color do you think a bee would like?"
5. Encourage her to create flower petals or leaves using construction and tissue papers, by drawing shapes onto the paper and then cutting them out. She should create a decorative plant for the outside that looks like the flower that will eventually be growing inside. Make sure to discuss size, scale, texture, and color during this step. What color will the flower be? Will it have smooth, straight petals or more textured, fuzzy pieces?
6. Have her glue the petals and leaves onto the milk carton, and set aside to dry.
7. Once the flower carton planter has fully dried, help her fill it with potting soil. Follow all directions given by the soil manufacturer, and make sure that your child wears appropriate gardening gloves. Do not allow her to handle or play with the soil.
8. Add the seed (or seeds) according to the package instructions. Water if needed.
9. Make sure to include instructions on watering, sunlight needs, and transferring to an outdoor flowerbed or planter.

As the flower grows, Mom can plan special activities with her little gardener such as watering or replanting the flower outside. Save the milk carton planter for future uses, and start new seedlings!

