

DIY Indoor Water Garden

Even when it's cold and dreary outside and spring seems like forever away, that doesn't mean you can't be "planting" your garden. Why not try an indoor water garden? Wander your local flea markets, check out an antique shop, or just browse through Grandpa's old shed and see what kind of fun glass bottles and clear containers you can find. Then plant a few seedlings and let them sprout in a sunny window (or cheat like I did and pick a few seedlings at your local nursery) and you're ready to garden!



1. First up, gather your items. Bottles? Check! Seedlings? Check! Water? Check! I fill up small jugs and let them sit out for a few days, just so they have time to de-chlorinate and get to room temperature.



2. You can try any kind of plant, from herbs to flowering plants. I've chosen Silver Philodendron, Polka Dot, and Gold Crest Aralia. Now it's time to gently remove the

seedling planter until you have the soil encase root ball in your hands. Carefully shake the roots loose from the soil.



3. Now gently rinse the soil from the root system. Then choose the bottle you want to work with, fill with your water, then slip the root system through the neck of the bottle until it sinks down in the water. If necessary, you can gently pinch off leaves or root ends to get a better fit. Then watch the roots spread and create a beautiful floating nature scene. Isn't that pretty? It's that simple! Let's "plant" some more!



4. You'll notice some root systems, like with the Polka Dot, are very thin and fragile. These require a somewhat deft touch when loosening the dirt and shaking it loose. Then choose your bottle and "plant" your Polka Dot! I find if I lay the roots together in my palm and rinse with water so they all cling together, they will slide into the bottle much more easily and without risk to the roots.



5. Some plants, like this Gold Crest Aralia, have such a tight knit root system that is hard to shake the soil loose. Gently work the root ball with the pads of your fingers until it becomes looser, then carefully extricate each plant. You'll also notice that some of the tallest plants have the shortest root systems. That means that just because it's tall, doesn't mean it needs a tall bottle. Pick something that balances the weight of the root system.



6. When all your bottles have been planted, don't discard the leftovers! Find cute little planters and take all that soil you've shaken off and repot them.



7. Now find a sunny spot for your newly planted water garden, and enjoy!

Maintenance Tips! Add water to the bottles as it evaporates. (Always keep a jug or two of water that has already been “aired” out.) Pay attention to the types of plants you’re choosing in terms of sun, partial sun, and so on, then “plant” them accordingly in the appropriate spots around your home. You can add liquid plant food if needed, though I find the sun and keeping the water topped off does just fine. If the water becomes murky or algae grows, a little less sun and a water change are in order. You may want to do partial water changes to keep from shocking the roots, but if you’re using your water jugs and the water is room temp, a full water change shouldn’t hurt them. As your plant grows and the root system continues to develop, you can pinch off the roots and trim the plant...or do what I do and simply get a bigger bottle! Then you have that cute little bottle to give another new plant an indoor home. Enjoy!