

Upcycled Magazine Coaster



Did you know that every year Americans throw away about 200 million tons of garbage? That means each person throws away about 1500 pounds of garbage every year. Yikes!

Where does all of this trash go? Most of it is buried in a landfill, or burned. Both of these "solutions" cost money and cause pollution, but there are alternatives - recycling and upcycling!

Recycling is when materials, like plastic or glass bottles are broken down and then reformed into new products. Upcycling is when you reuse an item as something else. There are a lot of benefits to upcycling items we already have. Upcycling reduces pollution by saving the energy and resources needed to make new things. It even helps save habitats because more trash = more landfills = less animal (and people) habitats. Also, upcycling is fun and free! You can make one of kind creations, like these coasters, without buying anything new. Happy Earth Day!

Materials:

- 6 magazine pages
- Scissors

Making the strips:

1. Tear out six magazine pages.
2. Cut off the jagged edge so that all four sides are straight.
3. Cut each page in half lengthwise (top to bottom).
4. Fold each strip in half lengthwise, so it is long and thin.
5. Fold the strips again, this time into thirds, so they are long and really thin! (Tip: Fold the cut edge in first so that it doesn't show.)
6. Your strips should be pretty thick now. Fold them one more time, this time in half widthwise, so they are short and thin.

Weaving the strips:

1. Interlock two strips to make an "L" shape.
2. Add another strip that wraps around the outside of the bottom strip.
3. Add another strip that interlocks with the bottom strip. '
4. Keep adding strips, alternating wrapping around and interlocking, until you have six strips across the bottom.
5. Now, the fun part! Add a strip to the side. Weave it over and under the bottom strips. Then, push them together tightly.
6. Repeat the over and under weaving with the rest of the strips.

Finishing the coaster:

1. The coaster should have 6 horizontal and 6 vertical strips. The part of the strips that are hanging over the edge can be tucked under the closest weave to hold it together.

Variations:

Try using different sizes of paper of different widths of strips. Can you make smaller coasters? Can you make a larger placemat? What happens if you start by cutting the paper into 24 strips instead of 12?

Now that you know how to weave, are there other materials you can use? Strips of fabric or yarn? You can upcycle clothing you don't wear anymore but cutting it into strips, or unraveling a sweater for the yarn.

Make sure you get permission from your grown-ups before upcycling materials from your home!

Planting Pollinator Seeds

What are pollinator seeds?

These are seeds that grow flowering plants that help feed pollinators. Without these plants, pollinator insects and animals would not have food.

Who are the pollinators?

Pollinator species include bees, bats, butterflies, hummingbirds, and more. All of these animals rely on the nectar from special flowers and plants for food.



Why are they important?

While getting nectar from plants, these animals and insects move pollen around, which helps the plant form a seed and grow. Many plants that we humans rely on for food, from apples to peppers, need pollinators in order to grow. One out of every three bites of food we eat is there because of pollinators!



Planting Pollinator Flowers

This special Earth Day kit from the Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance includes everything you need to plant some flowers that will feed our pollinator friends. Here is what you need to do:

1. Find a sunny spot for your new plants. This is where you'll put your cup of soil and seeds. Ideally, this spot should get at least 10-14 hours of sunlight a day. You can also plant the seeds outside!
2. Open up your cup of soil and sprinkle in some water. The soil should be damp, but not soggy, for planting. Keep some water nearby to use after planting!
3. Open up your seed packet and pick 3-5 seeds. Save the rest for planting outside, before a rainy day, anywhere that needs some flowers!
4. Poke some little holes in the soil – not too deep. Place the seeds in the holes and cover with soil. Sprinkle a few more drops of water on top.
5. Put the lid back on the cup and keep it on – like a mini greenhouse! - until the seed sprouts, which can take around 4 to 7 days. If the soil looks dry, add some more water sprinkles daily to keep the soil damp and the air humid.
6. When you have some green leaves sprouting, take the lid off the cup and make sure to keep the cup in a sunny spot. Continue to add water daily if the soil seems dry.
7. Once the plants are getting big, replot the plants into a bigger container – you can even use an upcycled planter like an empty yogurt cup, takeout or lunch container, or an empty can!
8. If you want to plant your flowers outside, wait until after mid-May to make sure the soil is warm enough.

Torn Paper Art Craft



We are celebrating Earth Day in April! But, what is Earth Day? Earth Day is a day to celebrate our planet! It has been officially celebrated since 1970. People do projects to help preserve and protect the Earth's many different animals, plants, and their habitats. Some people celebrate by cleaning up trash from parks or neighborhoods, or walking or biking instead of riding in a vehicle. Can you think of other ways to celebrate or protect our planet?

Materials:

- Earth outline or flower outline
- Colorful paper
- Glue

Steps:

1. Tear the colorful paper into small pieces, making sure to include blue and green.
2. For the Earth outline: Fill in the "land" part of the Earth outline with green pieces. Fill in the "water" part of the Earth outline with blue pieces.
3. For the flower outline: Fill in the "stem" part of the outline with green pieces. Use the other torn colors as you would like to fill in the flower.
4. Admire your pictures! Happy Earth Day!

Variations:

1. Draw your own outline of something different on the back of your Earth paper, or on another sheet of paper. Maybe a flower or a tree or the sun...anything! Fill it with scraps of different color paper.
2. Try using different types of paper, like magazine or newspaper pages.
3. If you can't find the colors of paper that you want, try coloring scrap paper with crayons, markers, chalk, or paint, and then tearing it into pieces.