

10 Techniques To Increase Germination Rate of Seeds



Germination refers to the process of a seed becoming a plant. Some people don't mind a very slow process. They'll plant flowers that take two years to show their colors. However, sometimes you want an experience a little bit closer to instant gratification. While no plant is going to germinate overnight, there are techniques to increase germination rate of seeds.

What does Increasing Germination Rate Mean?

Obviously, what you're trying to do here is to reduce the amount of time it takes for your plants to go from a seed to what you'd commonly recognize as a plant (a flower, a vegetable, etc.) However, note that often the process is

really about improving the conditions for the plant. In other words, when you make the conditions optimal, the plant grows more quickly. It's not as if you pour some magic fairy dust on the seeds and they suddenly sprout. Instead, you listen to what the seeds need and give it to them. That said, some plants really need [dormant periods and slow germination](#) to grow correctly.

Techniques To Increase Germination Rate of Seeds

After you've done some research to make sure that it's okay to speed things up, you might use these techniques to increase germination rate of seeds:

1. Find Out What Your Seeds Need

We're going to have general tips here that apply to many plants. However, you really need to research what each of your specific seed types need for optimal growth. Plant them at the right time of year, in the right growing medium, with the correct sunlight to optimize germination rates.

2. Disinfect Seeds Before Planting

[Science in Hydroponics](#) recommends using hydrogen peroxide or sodium hypochlorite solutions to remove microorganisms that might slow down germination rates.

3. Pre-Treat Seeds With Polyethylene Glycol Treatments

Science in Hydroponics also recommends pre-treating your seeds with PEG-6000. The specific amount and approach varies depending on the seeds you're trying to germinate.

4. Pre-Soak Seeds Before Planting in Soil

[AcuRite](#) notes that you should get started on the right foot by providing ample moisture for seeds before you even plant them.

5. Then Keep Watering Well

Seeds tend to need a lot of water to become plants. You'll usually use more water for seeds than you will once the plant starts growing. So, although you certainly don't want to overwater your seeds, you should make sure to keep them well-watered during those early days.

6. Plant Inside Before Outside

AcuRite also points out that you do best to plant your seeds inside first. Then, make an effort to acclimate them to the move outside. By doing this part slowly, you actually increase germination rate.

7. Add Gibberellic Acid

Science in Hydroponics says that this is a great way to stimulate seed germination.

8. Add Beneficial Fungi

As mentioned above, you want to disinfect seeds from bad microorganisms. However, you can also introduce good organisms to the seeds. For example, some seeds do well when you add specific beneficial fungi to stimulate growth.

9. Temperature Is Everything

Every resource you'll read about techniques to increase germination rate of seeds will emphasize the importance of getting the temperature right. Again, each plant needs something different. Some plants grow best in colder temperatures, others in warmer temperatures. Make the effort

to find out what your seeds need and accommodate them if you want your plants to grow quickly.

10. Improve Your Soil

Make sure that your soil is ideal for the seeds you're planting. Is it the right pH level? Does it offer the right kind of drainage and retention of moisture? Make the soil conditions right for the seeds to germinate into beautiful plants.

Read More:

- [Seed Starting on a Budget: Germination](#)
 - [What Are The Different Ways to Germinate Citrus Seeds?](#)
 - [5 Cheap Substitutes for Seedling Trays](#)
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Quotes About the Benefits of Gardening



There are so many benefits of gardening. Many of them relate to frugal living. For example, gardens remind us to enjoy the little things, rather than spending money on flashy stuff. The following quotes about the benefits of gardening remind me of the important stuff.

“The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature.

To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul.” – Alfred Austin

If you enjoy frugal gardening, then you spend barely anything at all except time in your garden. It doesn't cost much to feel dirt on your hands and sunshine on your skin. And yet, the benefits are immeasurable. Your body as well as your mind will thank you.

“I like gardening—it’s a place where I find myself when I need to lose myself.” – Alice Sebold

We often try to tackle life’s problems and challenges by ruminating on them. However, at times, this just makes things worse. Gardening gets us outside of our heads, into our bodies, into the greater world around us. This often points us to creative solutions we could never have just thought up in words.

“Everything that slows us down and forces patience, everything that sets us back into the slow circles of nature, is a help.” – May Sarton

We rush through so many moments of our lives, missing out on much of their beauty. However, you can’t rush gardening. The plants work in their own time. You must work at them diligently, daily. As a result, you learn patience. You might also learn to reap the benefits of mindfulness.

“Gardening simply does not allow one to be mentally old, because too many hopes and dreams are yet to be realized.” – Allan Armitage

Of course, people of all ages enjoy gardening. However, over the years, I’ve often especially enjoyed learning about elderly people who garden. The activity and planning and experience all contribute to keeping the mind young. And I love this idea about how the garden offers hope and that keeps

you excited about what's to come. After all, the bulbs you just planted aren't flowering yet.

“I can think of no better form of personal involvement in the cure of the environment than that of gardening.

A person who is growing a garden, if he is growing it organically, is improving a piece of the world.”- Wendell Berry

One of the greatest benefits of gardening is that it allows us to contribute to improving the planet in our own small way. We can't control the entire world and the choices made there. However, we can control our own choices. When we choose organic, natural, slow, frugal gardening, we make our corner of the world a little bit better. When we share that, we encourage others to do the same. This is how change happens.

Michael Pollan addresses the same thing above in a different way:

“The single greatest lesson the garden teaches is that our relationship to the planet need not be zero-sum ...

and that as long as the sun still shines and people still can plan and plant, think and do, we can, if we bother to try, find ways to provide for ourselves without diminishing the world.”

And finally, **Minnie Aumonier** puts it more succinctly:

“When the world wearies and society fails to satisfy, there is always the garden.”

Quotes sourced from [Treehugger](#)

Read More:

- [Garden Photo Walks for Mindfulness](#)
- [A Garden to Dye For](#)
- [5 Fun Ways to Use Yarn in the Garden](#)

5+ Cheap Ways To Make Soil More Acidic



Every garden's soil has a pH level. You can work with different pH levels using different plants. However, you have to know where you're starting. And in some instances, you might want to change the pH level. For example, if your soil is too alkaline for the plants you want to grow, then you need to add acid. Luckily, there are cheap ways to make soil more acidic.

Why You Might Make Soil More Acidic

Your garden soil might be alkaline, neutral, or acidic. None is necessarily better than the other overall. However, different plants have different needs. Therefore, you might need to make your soil more acidic in order to best grow the plants that you want to grow in your garden.

[Rural Sprout](#) notes that you might add acidity in order to:

- Improve nutrient consumption by your plants, making them healthier
- To change a specific plant's color; for example, to turn

hydrangea plants blue

- To grow specific plants that only grow well in more acidic soil

Cheap Ways To Make Soil More Acidic

Rural Sprout also notes that it's easier to choose the right plants for your soil than to change your soil. In other words, if you have alkaline soil, then choose plants that love that. However, you don't have to settle for this if you don't want to. You can, instead, find cheap ways to make soil more acidic.

Use Diluted White Vinegar to Acidify Soil

[YardKidz](#) notes that vinegar is one of the fastest cheap ways to make soil more acidic. You use distilled white vinegar to increase the acid in your garden soil. You can add it to the water that you use to water your garden, whether that's through an irrigation system or a watering jug. In addition to acidifying the soil, adding vinegar has other benefits. For example, it is a great form of natural pest control.

Add Coffee Grounds to Soil

YardKidz adds that coffee grounds are another cheap and quick way to acidify your garden soil. Note, though, that you have to use fresh coffee grounds. Ones you've already used to make coffee don't have an extreme enough pH level to acidify your garden. So, yes, this is a cheap option, but it's not the same as recycling your used coffee grounds for free.

Add Compost to Garden Soil

Rural Sprout points out, however, that adding compost to your soil can help acidify it over time. Therefore, if you add your used coffee grounds to your compost, then they do work in this way. This method is slower and less effective than the vinegar

or fresh coffee grounds. Often, it's used to make an alkaline soil more neutral rather than specifically acidic.

However, you can increase the acidity of your compost by being selective about what you add to it. Choose acidic ingredients including citrus rinds, oak leaves, or pine needles.

Pine Needle Mulch

Speaking of pine needles, Rural Sprout also notes that you can use these, oak leaves, and other acidic leaves to create your own mulch. Add this over your soil to acidify it.

Citrus Watering Your Soil

And speaking of citrus rinds, use them liberally in your garden to acidify the soil. You can also add citrus to your watering process. For example, add lemon juice to your watering can to improve soil acidity.

More Ways to Acidify Soil

[Happy DIY Home](#) explores some of the pros and cons of some of the above methods as well as other ways to acidify soil including:

- Sphagnum Peat Moss
- Elemental Sulfur
- Acidifying Fertilizers
- Iron Sulfate
- Aluminum Sulfate
- Natural Liquid Plant Feeds

Read More:

- [5 Reasons to Use Fish Amino Acid on Your Plants](#)
- [8 Uses of Baking Soda in Garden](#)
- [What Is The Best Growing Medium for Basil?](#)

Garden Photo Walks for Mindfulness



Much of the time, looking at life through our phones takes us out of the present moment. However, I find that I can use the phone's camera to practice mindfulness. Garden photo walks are my favorite way of practicing this on a regular basis.

What Is Mindfulness?

All that I mean by [mindfulness](#) is the experience of being present in the moment. It's about being with myself, without external noise from something like music or podcasts. It's about noticing what arises within me and around me. Moreover, mindfulness is an awareness that whatever is happening is perfectly okay. I don't need to judge it or change it.

What Are Garden Photo Walks?

There are three obvious components to a garden photo walk:

- A garden. It can be any size. Obviously, I love exploring huge public gardens such as the San Francisco Botanical Garden or our local Japanese Tea Gardens. However, backyard gardens are suitable for garden photo walks as well.
- Photos. For me, it's all about using the lens of the camera to direct my attention to different aspects of the garden. I move between landscapes and close-ups. I try to take photos not in order to share them or even save them but in order to see differently.
- Walking. However, this component can be very minimal. In a large garden, the meandering is a form of walking mindfulness. In a small garden, it's more about the micro-movements. The point is that I'm embodied, rather than in my head.

How The Camera Enhances The Garden Walk

Some people are fully capable of becoming present with the moment simply by sitting in their garden. Others experience it through the act of gardening itself. However, I tend to spend a lot of time in my head. I think the combination of walking while intentionally looking for photo opportunities gives me just the right amount of activity that I'm able to fully get into the moment.

Don't get me wrong; my monkey mind still drifts, of course. I'll find myself thinking about sharing a certain photo. I'll see an unusual plant and think about texting my sister to ask what it is (because she and my mom are far more likely to know than I am.) As with any meditation practice, the mind drifts.

But I keep refocusing, literally, through the lens of the camera. It reminds me to see what is in front of me.

Walking The Same Garden Through The Seasons

Obviously, it's always very engaging to walk in a brand new garden. I visit gardens often on my travels for that very reason. However, there's also something special about walking through the same garden again and again.

I've done photo experiments while I take a photo from the same point of the same plant every day for weeks. Each time, I'm presented with the opportunity to see it anew. This teaches me so much. It reminds me that we can choose to see our lives freshly each and every day. It reminds me that some days a plant may seem like it's wilting only to brighten up the next day in the sun.

Gardens are fleeting and also permanent in their cyclical growth. So are we. Photo garden walks teach me as much about people as they do about plants.

Read More:

- [A Garden to Dye For](#)
 - [5 Fun Ways to Use Yarn in the Garden](#)
 - [DIY Squash Trellis Under \\$10](#)
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5 Cheap Substitutes for Seedling Trays



Seed trays offer a great way to start off your planting season. However, you don't need to purchase actual trays from the gardening supply store. Instead, you can upcycle/recycle/DIY many terrific substitutes for seedling trays. Here are five good ideas:

What Are Seedling Trays?

Seed trays provide a great opportunity to begin growing multiple plants from seed at once. You germinate a bunch of them together in the trays. Then, when they're ready to go into pots or the ground, you transplant them. This allows you to start your planting season early, beginning plant growing inside until it's warm enough for outdoor planting.

Cheap Substitutes for Seedling Trays

You can easily purchase seedling trays. There are many different varieties, made of different materials, and in the come in a huge range of sizes. However, there's really no need to purchase these when it's so easy to make substitutes for seedling trays yourself.

1. Egg Cartons

Egg cartons provide one of the best substitutes for seedling trays. First of all, you probably already have some. If not, ask your neighbors for theirs. Therefore, this doesn't cost anything.

Second, as [Treehugger](#) explains, these are biodegradable. Therefore, when you're ready to move the seeds from the tray to the ground, all that you need to do is cut apart the egg carton and bury each section in the soil. In other words, you don't have to take the seed out of the tray at all.

Furthermore, if you still have your egg shells, then you can include those as part of the planting process. Leave half an eggshell in each cup of the egg carton. Plant the seeds inside of those. You get great nutrients and don't waste those eggshells.

2. DIY Newspaper Pots

Treehugger also notes that you can do the same thing with DIY newspaper pots. Make them yourself with recycled newspaper glued together with wheat paste. Plant the seeds in the pots. Then, when it's time, plant the pots into the soil. You can put each pot next to another inside of a cardboard box while the seeds are germinating.

3. Cardboard Coffee Cups

If you regularly purchase coffee to go, then you might be able to quickly accrue a bunch of cardboard coffee cups. Ask your friends if you need extras. Fill them with soil, poke some holes in the bottom for good drainage, put them into an upcycled box, and you have a seedling tray.

[Country Living](#) points out that you can use empty K-cups in the same manner.

4. Toilet Paper Roll Tubes

Basically, any cardboard or paper that you can fashion into a pot-like vessel can work. Therefore, both [Country Living](#) and [Treehugger](#) mention the common hack of using paper towel or toilet paper tubes. You fold one end to keep the soil inside, fill it with soil and the seed, and place into an empty box. Note: there are several alternatives for folding over the one end. For example, wrap the whole thing in brown paper bags.

5. Halved Citrus Rinds

Here is the most interesting suggestion from [Country Living](#). Take a lemon, lime, orange, or grapefruit and cut it in half. Juice it and enjoy the juice. Poke a few holes in the bottom for drainage. Then fill the center with soil and plant your seed in there. When it's time to plant, just bury the whole thing in the soil in your garden.

Read More:

- [Seed Starting on a Budget: DIY Containers](#)
- [Don't Throw Those Pots Away](#)
- [Buying Seedlings: Getting Your Money's Worth](#)

A Garden to Dye For



Several years ago my sister sent me a wonderful gift. She's one of those people who is so great at picking out the perfect gifts for people. The gift was a book called "A Garden to Dye For." She also sent me a set of Japanese Indigo seeds grown locally to her area. Somehow, all of this time has passed, and I haven't used this, yet. However, I'm determined to finally enjoy it this spring.

Garden to Dye For

"A Garden to Dye For" by Chris McLaughlin has a book subtitle that tells you exactly what this book is all about:

“How to Use Plants from the Garden to Create Natural Colors for Fabrics and Fibers”

In the introduction, the author explains that “the plan for this book is to bridge the gap between mainstream gardeners and the world of hand crafters.” The author explains that there are plenty of other great books that tell you about how to use plant dyes in fiber arts. However, most of them don’t address the home gardener. This book does.

Plants for Fabric Dyes = Slow Crafting

I am a huge fan of the [slow crafting movement](#). Crafting itself, of course, contributes to a slower way of life. When you sit down and make your own clothes, blankets, or home decor, you slow down. You stop contributing to the world of fast fashion.

As time goes on, you get more and more interested in ways to further slow down the craft. In other words, you want to get your hands dirty every step of the way. So, for example, I crochet. I started off buying various synthetic yarns from the store. From there, I moved on to buying organic, natural, sustainable yarn from local farms and independent dyers. From there, you can slow things down further by learning to spin and dye your own yarn. You might move on to get a small farm for raising your own fiber. And / or you might plant a garden to create your own natural dyes for your yarn.

The more you get involved in each process, the more you embrace and enjoy the benefits of the slow craft movement. It’s one thing, and an amazing thing, of course, to knit or crochet your own sweater. It’s another level entirely to grow the plants and dye the yarn before you even get to knitting.

7 Chapters In A Garden to Dye For

There are seven chapters in the book. These further indicate all that there is to learn about this unique niche of gardening for the fiber arts:

1. An Excuse To Plant More Plants

This is a more in-depth introduction to the concept of planting a garden specifically to use for fabric yarn dyeing.

2. All About Color

This chapter explores the different ways that you can dye fiber. In doing so, it also provides great information for how well different plants are going to work for different methods.

3. 12 Flowering Plants for Fiber Dyeing

In this chapter, we get a more in-depth look at working with twelve different flowering plants. Learn how to grow marigolds, hollyhocks, zinnia and more for this purpose.

4. Edible Plants for Fiber Dyeing

Do you prefer to grow fruits and vegetables? Wonderful. Many of these are great for dyeing as well. This chapter covers 15 options.



5. And Herbs Can Dye As Well

Herbs are another option for a beautiful garden that also produces amazing fiber dye options. There are 16 different herbs discussed in this section. One of those is Japanese Indigo. As I mentioned, when my sister gifted me this book,

she also gifted me a set of these seeds!

6. Your Landscape Already Grows Dyes

This chapter is all about looking at the native plants around you to find dyes in nature. Eucalyptus, lichen, juniper and willow offer a few examples.

7. Planning & Planting a Dye Garden

Before I read through this book, I would have assumed that this chapter was the longest. However, it's actually the shortest. It expands upon what the rest of the book already discussed. There are some general tips. Moreover, there are specific suggested layouts for different gardens. This chapter may come at the end but it's really just the beginning!

Read More:

- [5 Fun Ways to Use Yarn in the Garden](#)
- [DIY Squash Trellis Under \\$10](#)
- [Frugal Container Gardening](#)

How To Battle Garden Pests Cheaply and Naturally



Garden pests can be the bane of a home gardener's existence. You work so hard to get your plants to grow, then these bugs come along and destroy them. Are you looking for ways to battle garden pests cheaply and naturally? It's definitely possible!

It Doesn't Have To Be a Battle

Yes, we often talk about battling pests. However, it's better if you start with a few mindset. Instead of thinking about how you're going to battle garden pests cheaply and naturally, try to reframe your thinking. It's not a war. It's not a fight. Instead, it's a challenge to establish equilibrium in your garden.

After all, your garden is part of nature. So are these bugs. So, even though you don't want them to destroy your plants, you can maintain an appreciation for them. You can respect their urge to go for your plants. As you build this compassion into your gardening, it becomes mentally easier to face the challenge of how to handle them in your garden.

How To Battle Garden Pests Cheaply and Naturally

As you get ready to solve your pest problem, you want to focus on those two components: cost and natural pest repellants. You don't have to spend a lot of money to deter pests from getting into your garden. Moreover, you can do this naturally, which saves on costs and also treats your plants (and the pests) much more kindly.

5 Ways to Battle Garden Pests Cheaply and Naturally

Here are five good options:

1. Plant The Right Flowers In Your Garden

Did you know that some [flowers](#) have natural pest-repellant qualities? Therefore, if you plant these in your garden, you easily deter pests from getting into everything. For example, marigolds are a good pest repellent. Other flowers [attract specific predators](#) that will naturally take care of various pests for you. For example, catmint attracts lacewing insects, which will then prey on aphids for you, protecting your plants.

2. Baking Soda Is a Natural Pesticide

You can kill certain garden pests, such as slugs, by pouring [baking soda](#) directly on them. Alternatively, make a spray solution with baking soda and water to use as a pesticide on various plants in your garden. This is an eco-friendly natural pesticide option that hardly costs anything.

3. Dish Soap Does The Job, Too

Did you know that the [dish soap](#) that you already use in your kitchen might also be a good pest repellent? Mix organic,

natural non-bleach liquid dish soap with water. Spray this on your plants. It's a semi-natural and very affordable pesticide.

4. Make a Garlic Spray

If you want a pesticide that is even more natural than dish soap would be, then consider making a garlic spray. Puree garlic cloves, mix them with water, cayenne pepper, and a little bit of vegetable oil, then spray it on your plants.

5. Use Essential Oils

There are so many great [essential oils](#) that you can use to battle garden pests cheaply and naturally. Different pests will respond to different oils but start by trying rosemary, lavender, lemongrass, peppermint, spearmint, and orange essential oils.

Read More:

- [Ladybugs vs. Asian Ladybeetles](#)
- [Reasons Why Tomato Foliage Curl](#)
- [5 Factors That Affect Plant Growth](#)

Should I Use Enviro Ice On My Plants?



Every week, I receive food from Hungryroot. It's a great service through which you can get meal prep or just general groceries. Much of the food needs to stay cold. Therefore, they put cold packs inside the box. They use an option called Enviro Ice. You can dispose of it in many ways, including apparently by using it as plant food. Should I do that?

What Is Enviro Ice?

Here's what the Enviro Ice package looks like:



When it arrives, it's frozen. It works just like any other cold pack for food. Apparently, you can simply reuse it if you want to do that. However, I don't have a lot of use for cold packs. And I get one of these (which is probably about 9" x 12" every week. I certainly don't need that many. So I need to figure out other ways to use them.

Options for Reusing / Recycling Enviro Ice

Here's what the back of the package says:



All of this time, I've been doing the latter option. I leave the bag inside my sink until it's no longer frozen. Then I cut it open and let it drain into the sink. The first time that I tried it, I was worried that it would clog the sink. But true to [what the brand advertises](#), it does no such thing. It's designed specifically to go down the drain. So I drain it, rinse the bag, and recycle the bag.

However, as I was doing this habitually last week, I re-read the package. I noticed that the first option is actually to use it as plant food. So, I got curious about that. Should I feed Enviro Ice to plants instead of to the drain?

Enviro Ice For Plants

According to their website, Enviro Ice is the only product of its kind. It's a nitrogen-based product. This means that it's good for plants. They say that you can pour the gel directly onto the soil. Alternatively, you can dilute it with water. There's no particular benefit to the latter other than that it flows more easily.

They report that you get all of the benefits of nitrogen for your plants when you use this gel. It adds nutrients and improves growth. It's food for your plants. They say that you can use it for both indoor and outdoor plants.

What's My Hesitation?

All signs indicate that I should go ahead and try this in my own gardening efforts. So why am I hesitating at all? The truth is that I trust the product just fine, but I don't trust my own instincts when it comes to planting. As I've confessed to you in the past, I don't have a natural green thumb. I never really know what my plants want or need. I over-water and under-sun and all of the things that are bad for them.

So, what I'm worried about is that I won't use Enviro Ice properly. Will I give the plant too much of it and not realize what's happening until it's too late? Will it change the balance of other things I give the plant (water, light, etc.)? If so, will it be able to correct that?

The great thing about gardening, though, is that the stakes are low. I already have the product. I can try it and see what happens. I'll keep you posted.

Have you used Enviro Ice in gardening? What's your experience been?

Read More:

- [5 Reasons To Use Fish Amino Acid On Your Plants](#)
- [4 Cost-Effective Organic Garden Fertilizers](#)
- [Does My Brown Thumb Make Gardening a Waste of Money?](#)

5 Cheap Ways to Self Water Plants



Some people love the ritual of watering their plants each day. However, many of us like to simplify our schedules by setting up systems whereby plants can self water. Moreover, there might be times when you need plants to water themselves, such as when you go on vacation. It's good to know some cheap ways to self water plants. Here are five ideas.

1. Upside Down Wine Bottle

Instead of putting your next empty wine bottle into the recycling bin, use it as a self-water device for your indoor plants. [The Garden Glove](#) explains that you:

- Rinse the wine bottle thoroughly.
- Fill it with water.
- Re-cork it or put the screw cap back on.
- Drill a hole in the center of the cork / cap.
- Turn the bottle upside down.
- Press it several inches down into the soil as close to the center of the pot as you can get.

That's all; it will self water over the next several days. This is a great tip especially if you're going away for a long weekend and just want the plants to be properly watered while you're gone.

2. Two Liter Soda Bottle

The Garden Glove also offers this option, which is one of the cheap ways to self water plants that are outside or indoors in larger containers. Here's what you do:

- Thoroughly rinse a 2 liter bottle.
- Cut the bottom off of the bottle.
- Punch holes randomly around the entire body of the bottle.
- Dig a hole near the plant's root system that's big enough to completely cover the bottle.
- Bury the bottle in this hole, with the neck side up. You should surround the entire bottle with soil except for the top of it.
- Pour water into the top (which is the cut bottom, remember) until the vessel is full.
- It will now self-water.

3. Bathtub Plants

If you're looking for cheap ways to self water plants while you're on vacation, consider putting them in the bathtub. [ProFlowers](#) explains:

- Fill the bathtub with several inches of water.
- Lay a towel down in the water.
- Place plants, in their pots, on top of the towel in the water.

That's it. The plants should soak up the water while you're away.

4. String/ Rope Wicks

Many of the DIY methods of self watering use some variation on this. The idea is that you have a vessel of water near the plant. You insert string or rope into the water. The other end of the string or rope goes into the soil near the plant. The plant will then drink what it needs through the straw of the string.

5. Plastic Bag Bubble

ProFlowers also suggests this one. Here's how it works:

- Put wooden stakes in the corners of the plant's container, tucked into the soil.
- Water your plant as normal.
- Wrap a plastic bag around the four stakes. The bag should be slightly bigger than the plant itself. It should not touch the plant's leaves.
- Move the plant so that it's not in direct sunlight.

This should work like a tiny greenhouse.

Read More:

- [5 Frugal DIY Drip Irrigation Systems](#)
- [Harvesting Rainwater for the Frugal Gardener](#)
- [Keeping the Garden Well-Watered: 5 Tried and True Methods](#)

Benefits of Community Gardens



I live in an apartment in San Francisco. I have a porch, windowsills with different light levels, and some counter space to do any gardening that I'd like to do. However, I don't have a yard. Therefore, if I wanted to get serious about outdoor gardening, I would need to explore other options. That's gotten me wondering about community garden.

San Francisco Loves Community Gardens

[San Francisco has over 40](#) community gardens. In case you didn't know, this sixte is approximately 50 square miles in total. We have lots of people. And yet, we have lots of green space. You'll find mini parks, small parks, rooftop gardens, and large parks all over. Plus we have beaches and other natural landscapes.

So, we have a lot of community gardens. You can join them as a resident. However, a lot of people want to get in on these. Therefore, there's typically a waiting list.

Benefits of Community Gardens

From what I can see so far, there are a lot of [great benefits](#) to community gardens. There are benefits for the individuals who do the garden as well as for the larger community.

Community Benefits

Gardens strengthen and beautify the local community. They bring the health and wellness of nature to urban areas. People come together in new ways, saying hi to their neighbors as they swap seeds and work side by side. In San Francisco, we often miss out on opportunities to mingle with different generations of people. Community gardens offer a great place to do that.

Sometimes these gardens give back through various programs. They might teach kids about gardening. Perhaps the healthy produce grown is given to people in need. Each garden is different but there are many ways that they give to the community.

Individual Benefits

I actually got started thinking about this when I was recently reading the popular book about Swedish Death Cleaning by Margareta Magnusson. The book is primarily about decluttering, but she mentions gardening several times. She loves gardening, and yet as she aged, she realized that she couldn't do the massive gardening projects that she had done in the past. Therefore, when she downsized to a smaller house, she gifted all of the tools in her gardening shed to the new homeowners, who were thrilled to take on her gardening hobby.

7 Benefits to Consider

She moved to a place that has a garden for the apartment building. And she listed some of the benefits as:

- The whole area is kept beautiful whether or not she does the work.
- There's always someone new to take on gardening tasks if you're no longer up to the task.
- Sharing seeds and tools makes gardening more affordable.

She continues to grow small things on her balcony while also enjoying the community garden. Additional benefits for the individual include:

- An opportunity to learn more about gardening from those who know
- Friendship, connection, a reprieve from loneliness
- All of the mental and physical health benefits of connection to the earth
- Easy access to many different kinds of plants and produce even if you only grow one type yourself then barter

Have you ever tried a community garden? What are your thoughts?

Read More:

- [Expand Your Gardening Possibilities With Seed Swapping](#)
- [Gardening: More than a Solo Activity](#)
- [10 Ways to Get Free Plants](#)