

How to make your own greenhouse

Greenhouses are used to grow plants, in particular plants that need a lot of warmth and those that are not usually growing in the climate that we have here in Ireland.

Large greenhouses often have glass or plexiglass walls. During the day, when the sun shines into the greenhouse, the air in the greenhouse warms up and so do the soil and the plants. What helps keeping the heat inside is that hot air always rises up. So as soon as the air at the bottom, near the soil, gets warmer, it rises up and is replaced by cooler air – which in turn warms up and rises. As the warm air can only rise as far as to the roof but can't escape, the temperature in the greenhouse keeps increasing much faster than the temperature outside. This helps creating a kind of microclimate inside the greenhouse. Gardeners in many places around world use this to grow plants that otherwise wouldn't grow in these locations.

Here is a way to make your own greenhouse at home with simple materials.

What you need

Seed sowing compost

Seeds

Clear plastic bottles

Scissors

Water

For larger greenhouses: Toilet paper rolls and cotton wool or household tissue

Depending on the size of your bottle and also depending on how many and what kind of seeds you want to see sprout and grow, you might prefer one of these two options. Of course you can go even bigger – your plastic container is the limit!



Depending on the size of your bottle and also what kind of seeds you want to sow you can use larger or smaller plastic bottles and create your own plastic bottle greenhouse.

Option 1 – Small or medium sized water bottle

1. Cut off the bottom half of the water bottle so that you create a pot and a cover for your greenhouse.
2. Add some compost to the pot.
3. Take a seed and press it gently into the compost. Scatter some compost on top of it to cover it up.
4. Add a few drops of water.
5. Place the roof over your seed in the plastic bottle pot.
6. Keep your greenhouse in a sunny spot.
7. Over the next few days take good care of your seeds (follow the instructions on the seed pack) and watch them sprout and grow!



The bottom half of your plastic bottle is the plant pot, the top half functions as the greenhouse roof.

Option 2 – Large water bottle

1. Cut off the bottom of the water bottle so that you create a floor and a roof for your greenhouse.
2. Cut the toilet paper roll in half so that you have two ca. 5 cm high tubes.
3. Put some cotton wool or a crumpled up sheet of household tissue into a toilet paper roll so that it closes off one side. This will be the bottom of your toilet paper roll flower bed. The cotton wool or household tissue will help holding the compost in place and it will also help keeping the moisture inside your toilet roll plant pot.
4. Now add some compost so that the toilet roll is filled almost to the top.
5. Take one seed per roll and press it gently into the compost. Scatter some compost on top of the seed to cover it up.
6. Add a few drops of water.
7. Repeat with as many toilet rolls as you like (or as many as you can fit onto the floor of your greenhouse).
8. Place the roof over your toilet roll pots.
9. Keep your greenhouse in a sunny spot.
10. Over the next few days take good care of your seeds (follow the instructions on the seed pack) and watch them sprout and grow!



Cut the bottom off your plastic bottle. It is the floor of your greenhouse. The toilet paper rolls are the plant pots.



Use some kitchen tissue at the bottom of the toilet roll pots, then add the compost and your seeds. Close the greenhouse – and wait for the seeds to grow!