

Snail protection: reuse your plastic bottles

A great activity to do at home. You'll make good use of those single-use plastic bottles and also protect your plants from snails and slugs – without having to kill them.

We saw the following activity at Carrick-on-Suir Library where pupils planted sunflowers and made a snail proof protection from plastic bottles. Judging from the size of the sunflowers after several weeks it worked well!



Local school pupils protect their sunflower plants with home-made snail proof protectors with Carol Delany (Carrick-on-Suir Library - right). The result: giant sunflowers along the garden of Carrick-on-Suir Library!

What you need

Plastic bottle

Cutter or sharp scissors (under parent supervision!)

A sharpie (optional)

What to do

1. Cut the top and bottom part of the bottle to get a tube.
Either use the grooves in the bottle to guide you or mark where you want to cut with a sharpie.
2. From the rim of the tube, cut about 2 cm into the plastic. Repeat every 1 to 2 cm until you have a crenelated border on one side of the tube. If you like, cut them into triangular spikes.
3. Carefully fold the tabs or spikes to the outside so they look like the petals of a flower.
4. With these petals facing upwards, pull your snail barrier over the plant you want to protect. Be careful to not damage the plant in the process.



Carefully cut the top and bottom off a single-use plastic bottle to create a tube.



Cut about 2 cm deep into the top end of the tube and fold the plastic to the outside. Then put the protector around the plant you want to keep safe.

How it works

Simple: the snails and slugs will have a hard time climbing over this fence – and most won't bother! Those who do try climbing up the side will face an additional challenge when they come to the outward facing tabs or spikes. Only the most determined will keep on going.

Why this is better than using slug killer

We might not like snails and slugs – either because they ruin our plants in the garden or because of their slimy nature or both – but they are quite useful to have around.

While we only notice them when they eat our lettuce or delicate flowers, snails and slugs also clear away lots of rotting stuff.

In addition, they are also food for other animals such as frogs, hedgehogs, ducks and other birds and many more. You can imagine if any of those eat a slug that has been killed with a chemical substance this can easily harm these animals too.