

Make use of it all

The garden centres are filling up with plant pots and handy peat pucks.

In addition to these prefabricated items, now is the perfect time to repurpose the accumulation of plastic containers that once held yogurt, salad and the like.

With a few holes for drainage, large yogurt containers are the perfect size for a healthy tomato seedling while the salad trays are ideal for starting lettuce or whatever your heart desires. The large yogurt container can also be put to use as labels for seedlings. After cutting off the rim and bottom, cut the remaining cylinder into vertical strips and use a permanent marker for labelling. The labels will serve you until plants get situated outside.

While many gardeners have success sowing lettuce seeds directly in the garden, I have consistently had poor germination outdoors. I have found that I achieve best results sowing in trays indoors and putting the plants out when they outgrow the container. Remember that when planted all at once, lettuce matures all at once. Planting in batches two weeks apart throughout the season will ensure a continuous supply of delicious greens.

With a 'Potmaker,' strips of newspaper can be transformed into small paper pots which degrade nicely once planted out. Make sure that all of the paper pot is buried beneath the surface or it may act as a wick and dry out the planting.

While I do not care for styrofoam as a rule, 10 oz. drinking cups make a cost effective solution for plant pots and are an ideal size. Rinsing them with mild soapy water at the beginning of each season, they can be used year after year before they are eventually retired to the recycling bin. To prepare each cup, cut three vertical slits from the bottom halfway up the side to allow for adequate drainage and aeration. With a ballpoint pen, pots can easily be labelled and when the ink eventually fades, an impression of the name will remain.

Nothing needs to be exactly one way. Use what you have on hand and make it work. Have fun, make use of it all and make it your own.

By Celene McClintock