

## CRAFT

# PLASTIC BAG PLANT POT

## AGES

Teens/Adults

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Turn plastic bags into treasure! To reduce the risk of them ending up in our precious waterways, gather patrons to repurpose their plastic grocery bags into yarn for plant pots. This is a simple beginner crochet project. If you don't crochet, consider enlisting the help of a volunteer instructor, or see the alternate craft options for coasters, reusable bags, and braided flower pots. This is also good for a passive and/or virtual program with take-and-make bags. Suggested runtime: 60–90 min.



Image source: Shutterstock

## MATERIALS AND PREPARATION

Materials:

- Plastic grocery bags (collect beforehand)
- Crochet hooks
- Coat hangers
- Scissors
- Pins
- Sewing needles and strong thread
- Printed instructions (optional)



Image source: Shelby Graam of The Indianapolis Public Library, Indianapolis, IN

## ADAPTATIONS:

You could also combine this program with outreach with a local craft group or community organization—or host a pop-up library!—to hold this program out in the community.

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To make plarn:

1. Flatten your plastic bags out on a tabletop.
2. Fold the bags vertically into thirds, and smooth them out.
3. Working with one bag at a time, use scissors to cut neatly across the top and bottom, removing the handles and the bottom seams.
4. Starting at one end of your folded bag, slice the bag into pieces that are approximately 1”.
5. Unfold these pieces; they will all be loops.
6. Connect the loops as follows:
  - Lay out two loops so that the left loop overlaps the right.
  - Reach your left hand underneath the left loop and pull its end backwards towards the left, underneath the right loop’s end, and then pull it back through the left loop.
  - The far side of the left loop will flip over and form a knot. Pull it taut, but be careful not to rip the bag.
7. Continue to connect the loops, adding additional loops to the left side of the chain.
8. Make sure that the two sides of each loop are even.
9. Once you have connected all of your loops, continue with the rest of your bags, and wrap your plarn into a ball or around a piece of cardboard to keep it from getting tangled.

To make a braided flower pot:

1. Take three balls of plarn and tie the ends of them to the bottom of a coat hanger, leaving a “tail” beyond the knots (about 5”).
2. Begin to braid the three strands of plarn into a basic flat plait: Cross the right-hand section over the centre section, then the left-hand section over that. Continue to criss-cross the strands, alternating which section is in the centre.
3. Try to maintain a medium-level tension as you braid. Too little tension and the braid will fall apart; too much and you will get a very small braid with no texture.
4. Continue to braid until you are about 5” from the end of the plarn, and then tie the ends together.
5. Untie the top from the coat hanger, then retie those ends together.
6. Coil your braid into a flat circle. This will be the base of your flowerpot, so adjust the size according to how big or small you would like it to be.

**TIP:**

See Resources for a link to the crochet tutorial.

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7. Secure the base with a pin, and then sew it together by weaving a threaded needle over and under the layers as you push it through the centre, and across to the other side.
8. Do this as many times as necessary to secure the base.
9. Begin to build up the sides of the flowerpot by coiling the braids and stacking them on top of one another. Tack the layers into place with the needle and thread every 1–2" by sewing diagonally through the braids and securing them to the layers beneath them.
10. Repeat the process until you reach the end of your braid, or you reach a size for your flower pot that you like.

## UNIQUE SPACE AND/OR PERSONNEL NEEDS

One extra crafty staff member or volunteer to help braid or crochet.

## RESOURCES

### Web

Plarn tutorial from Amanda's Happy Hearth: <https://bit.ly/3oWMC0L>

Plastic bag flower pot crochet from Mami Made It: <https://bit.ly/2SyqGg6>

Braided plarn tutorial from SFGate: <https://bit.ly/3oTKwPf>

Braided plastic pot tutorial from 1 Million Women: <https://bit.ly/3fMIFHT>

Plarn and coaster tutorial from Kenarry: <https://bit.ly/3c0qT2O>

### Books

#### Non-fiction

*Upcycling: 20 Creative Projects Made from Reclaimed Material* (2016) by Max McMurdo

*Upcycling Outdoors: 20 Creative Garden Projects Made from Reclaimed Materials* (2018) by Max McMurdo

*Upcyclist* (2015) by Antonia Edwards

#### Fiction

*Balance of Fragile Things: A Novel* (2012) by Olivia Chadha (adult)

*Falling Into Green: An Eco Mystery* (2012) by Cher Fischer (YA)

The Last Wild trilogy (2014–2015) by Piers Torday (children's)