

# BENEATH THE SOIL PROJECT

This activity will let you see what happens 'beneath the soil' and how the potatoes are formed

## You will need:



- A clear plastic bottle,  
2 litres or bigger,  
with the top cut  
(Adult supervision required)
- Newspapers
- Compost
- One seed potato

## Method

Fill the plastic bottle 1/3 full with compost.

Place the chitted seed potato in the soil with the shoots facing up and cover with at least 5 cm of soil. Water lightly.

**IMPORTANT:** Do not soak the compost at this stage as it will rot the tubers. It should only be kept slightly damp.

Wrap the bottle in a loose newspaper sleeve; as the potatoes grow, they should then form in the dark against the side of the bottle. Place on a sunny windowsill and watch it grow.

When the tops of the plants are level with the top of the bottle, add more soil to halfway up the stems. As the plant starts growing, it sends out potato-bearing side shoots all the way up the stems. These shoots will soon become covered in small potatoes.

The bottle should be left as long as possible. To check progress, simply lift the newspaper sleeve, allowing the children to watch what is happening beneath the soil.

Do not expect the tuber to last longer than 7 weeks due to the lack of nutrients/compost and space.

**Do not eat the potatoes harvested  
from the Beneath the Soil project.**

**Why not let us know how you get on and send in your stories or pictures of your Beneath the Soil project? Share your results with other schools:**

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