

# Cloches

A cloche is a cover that is used to protect young plants from frosts. Use a rainy day in early spring to get ready for seed planting by making your own cloches from empty plastic bottles. You can also use your cloches to warm the soil, so that you can plant seeds earlier and benefit from a longer growing season. Just place your cloches over the soil for two to three weeks before planting.



What you need:

- Plastic drink bottles
- Scissors

What to do:

1. Remove the labels and lids from the plastic bottles.
2. Wash the bottles thoroughly.
3. Cut the bottom 5 - 10cm off each bottle and discard the cut off piece.
4. Place your DIY cloche over a seedling that is already growing, over a seed that has yet to germinate or over the bare soil to warm it up prior to planting.
5. Push the open bottom of the bottle into the soil so that it stands upright easily.
6. You can easily remove the cloche for planting or when the plant grows too big.

Ways to extend this activity: Challenge children to set up an investigation to compare the growth of plants when protected by a cloche to those that are unprotected. Alternatively, investigate the effects of warming the soil by planting seeds in warmed soil and cold soil. Investigate different sizes of cloche. Do larger or smaller ones seem to protect the plants better? You could use hula hoops cut in half and a sheet of plastic to make a small DIY poly tunnel.

National Curriculum Links: Observe seeds. Describe how plants need water, light and a suitable temperature. Explore the requirements of plants for growth. Identify and describe the different parts of plants.

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