

Recycled Planters: *The Tin Forest* Companion Activity

Let's get started by reading *The Tin Forest*, written by Helen Ward, and illustrated by Wayne Anderson. Don't own the book? Visit your local library or the library at Temple University's Ambler Campus to check it out!

Discussion Questions:

Before jumping into the activity, take some time to discuss *The Tin Forest* together. Below are some questions to start the conversation—modify these questions to engage both younger and older listeners/readers.

1. Did you like the story?
 - a. Why or why not?

2. What do you think the word "rubbish" means?

3. Is it good that the old man lives in a house surrounded by rubbish?
 - a. Explain.

4. What does the old man dream about at night?
 - a. What do you dream about at night?

5. What does the old man build?
 - a. Why do you think he does this?

6. Who visits the old man?

7. What does the visitor bring with it? (There are two answers to this question.)

8. What surrounds the old man's house at the end of the story?

9. How do you feel when you spend time outside in nature?
 - a. Why do you feel this way?

10. Why do you think it is important to take care of the environment?

Recycled Planters Craft:

In the story, *The Tin Forest*, the old man lives in a house surrounded by trash. He dreams that he lives in a house surrounded by a forest filled with plants and animals. He then has an idea to create his own forest out of the trash that surrounds him, making his home a little bit more beautiful. Through this activity, we will use “trash” to make recycled planters that we can then use to hold a plant, creating something beautiful out of discarded materials.

Materials –

- Recycled Objects (Get Creative!)
 - Tin Cans
 - Lids
 - Bottle Caps
 - Nuts and Bolts
 - Yogurt Cups
 - Glass Jars
 - 2-Liter Soda Bottles
 - Soda Cans
 - Wire
- Adhesive
- Paint
- Paint Brushes
- Potting Soil
- Plants
- Scissors
- Awl (or anything that will puncture a tin can)

Steps –

1. Go on a hunt for trash or recyclable materials around your house or start a collection for your planned planter. Once you have your desired materials, it's time to start creating!
2. Choose an object that will serve as your planter. Be sure to poke a small, pencil-sized hole in the bottom of the object (this step should be done by an adult or under adult supervision). This will allow water to properly drain from the bottom of the planter.
3. Once you have chosen your planter, Decide how you would like to decorate it. Would you like to construct an animal friend, like the old man in *The Tin Forest* did, or would you like to create something from your own imagination? We have provided a picture for inspiration, courtesy of Craft Invaders.
4. Decorate your planter. This may involve gluing, cutting, and painting. Whatever you decide to do, be sure to get an adult's permission to do so! If necessary, let your creation dry.
5. Now that you have a planter, it's time to put it to use! Fill your planter with soil, then plant something in the soil, whether it's a flower, an herb, or really anything you'd like!



Whiting, Sarah. 2020. *Craft Invaders*,
<https://craftinvaders.co.uk/how-to-make-a-recycled-tin-can-owl/>.

Just like the old man in the story, you have created something beautiful out of trash! It's time to watch your new plant grow in the planter you have made. Enjoy!