



Earth Day 22 April 2020 Celebrating 50 years of Earth Day



The theme for Earth Day 2020 is **CLIMATE ACTION**, a theme that the South London Botanical Institute also feels passionate about. In February this year the SLBI joined organisations around London and the world in declaring a climate emergency, recognising that climate change is the most critical issue of our time and the biggest challenge to the future of all living species on this planet – plant and animal.

So...how can we contribute to Earth Day 2020?

Here are a few suggestions that you could do whilst we are still in lockdown due to the government's restrictions during Covid-19.

- 1) **Make a poster** to display in your windows or chalk a message on the pavement outside for people passing by to see. Let your neighbourhood know that you care about your Earth and the animals and plants that live here.



- 2) **Guerrilla Gardening** – can you find an unloved, neglected piece of land that could do with a bit of love and care? It doesn't matter how small it is: it could be the base of a street tree or an abandoned corner where there is only scrappy soil and weeds growing. Plant a few seeds – packets of wildflower seeds are good – water them regularly and see how they brighten up the spot in just a few weeks. This will be good for pollinators too!

Alternatively take part in International Sunflower Guerrilla Gardening Day on 1 May 2020. See attached link below for ideas on where to plant your sunflower seeds.

<http://www.guerrillagardening.org>



- 3) Recycle an old soup or baked beans can to make a **hanging planter**. If you peel the paper off, you can paint and decorate the outside of your can in bright colours. You could grow herbs like thyme or basil, or flowers such as marigolds or nasturtiums. These plants provide food for pollinators too. Don't forget to water them regularly.
- * make sure the top edge of your can isn't sharp – get a grown up to check for you.



- 4) **Take a cutting:** cuttings would make great gifts for family and friends when we come out of lockdown. You can make a pot out of newspaper (see link below), fill it with some compost and place it in a container so that when you water it, it won't leak everywhere. Using a clean pair of scissors, cut a piece about 8cm long off a side shoot of your plant. Remove the bottom leaves from the cutting and immediately insert it into your pot of compost until about 1/3 of the cutting is in the soil. Water regularly and place in a warm, sunny position – it will take a few weeks for your cuttings to root.
- Good plants to take cuttings from include geraniums, lavender, ivy or herbs such as thyme, sage or rosemary.

<https://www.instructables.com/id/How-to-make-organic-planting-pots-using-old-newspa/>



- 5) Celebrate the arrival of Spring by planting an **Egg Carton Garden**. You can plant seeds into an old cardboard egg carton that has been filled with compost. Put the carton on a sunny windowsill, water it regularly and wait for your seeds to germinate. When the seedlings have grown a bit bigger (see picture), you can carefully transplant them out into the garden or plant the whole thing outside and the cardboard carton will gradually decompose.
- Good quick growing seeds to sow are sweet peas, nasturtiums, marigolds, sunflowers and poppies, or try some food crops like peas, rocket, beetroot and radish.

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Our world needs you - and your actions, no matter how small, will make a difference this Earth Day 2020.

