

Egg Carton Creations — A Dozen Ideas

In most communities, eggs come in one of two types of cartons: molded paper or polystyrene. Either type will work well in craft activities. Here are some helpful hints to keep in mind when preparing for an activity: A sturdy pair of scissors will be needed to cut egg-cartons apart; a pair of curved manicure scissors is best for cutting small details. Molded paper cartons have a surface that is easy to color with crayons, markers or water-based paints. Polystyrene cartons have a surface into which designs can easily be etched with a simple tool — experiment with a fingernail, screw, pencil, fork or the end of a drinking straw. Any water-based coloring will be difficult to add to the waxy surface. Try mixing a few drops of detergent with water-based paints — this will allow the paint to stick to the surface. Crayons work to a limited extent.

The following are directions for specific egg carton creations. We encourage you and your children to experiment and create different creatures. You may want to use this activity as an opportunity to teach about insects and flowers and their interesting features.

General Materials:

work area covered with newspaper
used egg cartons
scissors
glue
crayons and markers
paints and brushes
used twist ties
pipe cleaners
scraps of colored paper
pieces of ribbon or yarn
hole punch
film canisters, spools or small round pill bottles
decorations: straws, toothpicks, seeds, dry cereals,
small buttons, fabric scraps, sequins, glitter,
feathers.
art aprons

Note: Adults may have to cut and trim cartons for young children ahead of time.

Snail

1. Cut out and trim one egg section of a carton. Have children color and decorate the snail "shell."

2. Take a twist tie and coil it. Fit the straight end of the twist tie up under the lower edge of the shell and secure it in place with a small piece of tape.



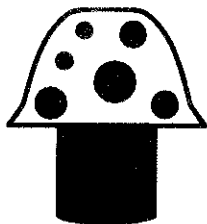
4. Cut a twist tie in half and fold that in half. Push one end through the upper portion of the coiled twist tie and pull it until the fold is half way through. These are the snail's antennae.

Mushroom

1. Cut out and trim one egg section of a carton for the "cap" of the mushroom. Let children color and decorate the cap.

2. Take a film canister, spool or small round pill bottle and put glue around the rim.

3. Press the mushroom cap



on top of the glued rim and hold it in place for a minute or so. Set the mushroom in a place where it won't get bumped to dry.

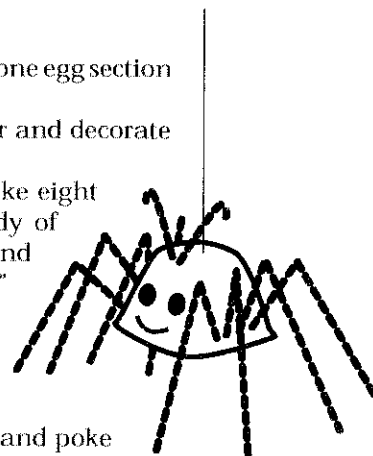
Spider

1. Cut out and trim one egg section of a carton.

2. Let children color and decorate the spider.

4. Help children poke eight twist ties into the body of the spider for legs. Bend each piece into an "L" shape.

5. To hang the spider from a "web", thread a needle with thread or fishing line and poke the needle up through the middle of the spider from the bottom. Secure the line inside with a piece of tape.



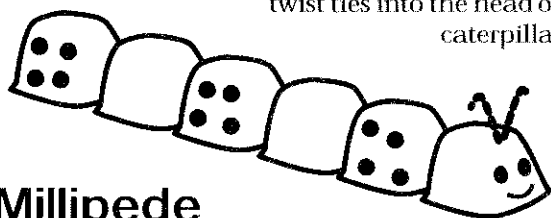
Caterpillar

1. Cut the bottom of an egg carton in half lengthwise to make a caterpillar with six humps. Trim rough edges.

2. Explain to children how to use a hole punch. Let them practice punching circles out of colored paper. They can use these circles for eyes or decoration.

3. Encourage children to decorate their caterpillar's humps with a variety of materials.

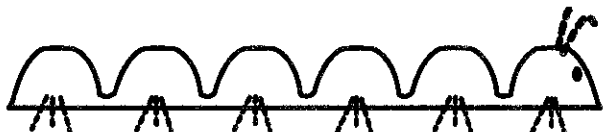
4. Help children make antennae by poking two twist ties into the head of the caterpillar.



Millipede

1. To make a millipede, follow the directions for making a caterpillar.

2. Add legs to the millipede by breaking 18 toothpicks in half and poking six pieces into each section. (Three on each side.)



Wee Bee

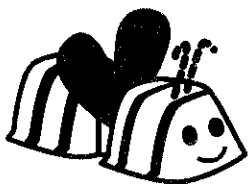
1. Cut out and trim a two-egg section of a carton.

2. Color the bee yellow if you wish. Black stripes can be drawn on with crayon or cut from black paper and glued on.

3. Help children cut out wings and glue them to the body of the bee.

4. Punch out two dots from black paper and glue them in place for eyes. Draw in a mouth.

5. Help children make antennae by poking two twist ties into the head of the bee.



Flowers

1. Cut an egg carton into 12 separate egg sections and trim around the edges. Each section will be a flower.

2. Give children one section to work on at a time. Let them cut several slits and small indentations around the edge to form the petals of the flower.

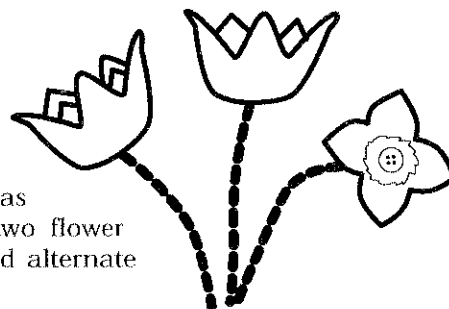
3. They may color the flower inside and out.

4. Help children make a stem. Poke a pipe cleaner up through the bottom center of the flower. Bend the top one quarter inch over and tape to keep it in place.

5. For the center of the flower, let children glue a ball of tissue paper, a bead or button in the middle of the flower.

Double Flowers

To make fuller flowers, follow the same directions as above but stack two flower heads together and alternate the petals.

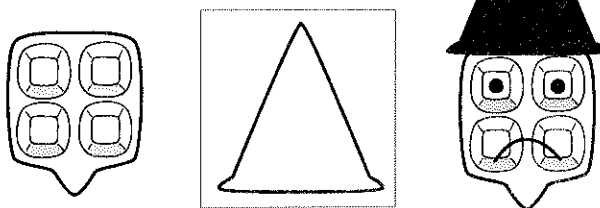


Witches

1. Cut one egg carton into three parts to make three witches. Each part should contain four egg sections.

2. Help children draw and cut out a tall, pointed witches hat from black construction paper. Glue it to the top edge of the witches head.

3. Let children color big, black eyes and a turned down mouth using paint or crayons.



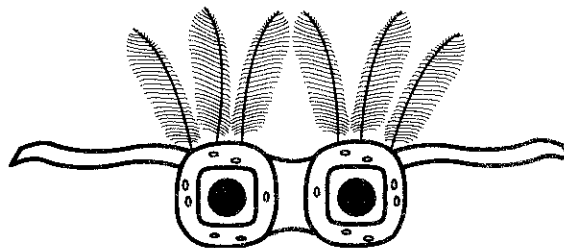
Egg Carton Eyes

1. Cut out two individual egg sections. In each, cut out a circle in the bottom to make the eye holes.

2. Let children color and decorate the egg sections with sequins and feathers.

3. Cut a piece of ribbon long enough to tie around a child's head. Staple the egg sections to the ribbon so that they fit over the child's eyes.

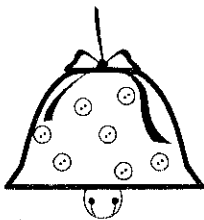
4. Wrap the ribbon around the child's forehead and tie it in the back.



Holiday Bells

Additional Materials:

small jingle bells



1. Cut out and trim one egg section of a carton.
2. Tie a small jingle bell to the end of a piece of yarn or ribbon.
3. About an inch up from the bell make a double knot in the yarn or ribbon.
4. Poke a hole in the bottom of the egg carton section using the pointed end of a scissors or a sharp

pencil. The hole should be big enough for the yarn or ribbon to thread through, but small enough to not allow the knot to pass through.

5. Thread the empty end of the yarn or ribbon through the hole in the egg carton and slide it down until the "bell" rests on the knot.

6. Let children decorate the outside of the bell with crayons, glitter and sequins.

7. Sing "Recycling is the Way" to the tune of "Jingle Bells". (See "Sing for Recycling" in **Wee Recyclers Activity Guide**.)

Seedling Starter*

Additional Materials:

potting soil

seeds (rye grass or carrot seeds grow quickly)

water

plastic bag and twist tie

1. Cut an egg carton in half, using the top side for a tray to trap drainage, and the egg section side for potting soil and seeds.

2. Help children make two or three holes with a sharp pencil in the bottom of each egg section for drainage.

3. Let children fill each egg section with a small amount of potting soil. Set the egg section in the drainage tray.

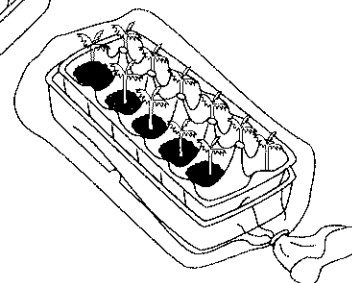
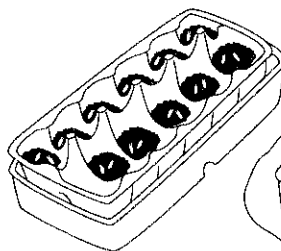
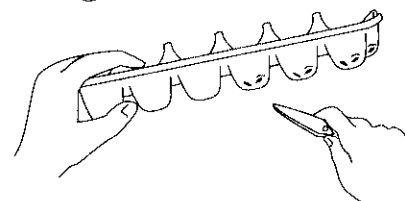
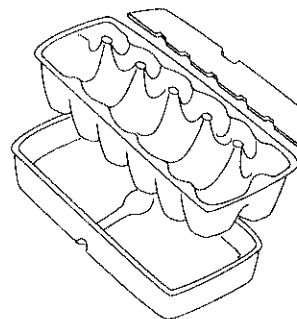
4. Help children plant a few seeds in each section according to package directions and water the potting soil slightly.

5. Place the entire egg carton in a clear plastic bag and close it with a twist tie.

6. Set the cartons in a sunny window. Maintain moisture in the bag so seedlings don't dry out.

7. When plants are big enough, transplant them outside or to a bigger container.

* Adapted from: **Let's Put Waste In It's Place** (see "Resources").



Going Beyond:

- Create a flower garden. Stick the stems of many egg carton flowers into a hard piece of "styrofoam" that is colored green. Place egg carton creatures on the ground around the flowers.
- For a Mother's Day gift, make three to five egg carton flowers with stems. Arrange them in a decorated container. (See "Wee Reusables" for decorated container instructions.)
- Use styrofoam egg cartons to hold small amounts of different colored paints.
- Egg cartons make great organizers of small things like beans, buttons, seeds, shells or stones.
- See "Wee Printers" for printing with "styrofoam".