Build Your Own Terrarium



<u>Objective</u>: A terrarium is like a miniature habitat growing inside a container. Be creative in designing your mini-world and recognize the phases of the water cycle when it's complete.

Materials:

- An enclosed container like a plastic food container with a hinged lid like the kind that holds strawberries or salad greens at the store. You can also use a plastic bottle by cutting off the top to build the terrarium, then taping it back on.
- Plastic bag (old bread bag) if your container's design includes holes at the bottom.
- Pea gravel or small rock
- Potting soil or dirt
- Larger rock(s) for decoration like mountains
- Small indoor plants like succulents (optional)
- Clumps of moss scraped off a fence, brick wall or patio. Moss is everwhere if you take a look.
- Found natural objects like sticks or pinecones
- Spray bottle with water



Terrarium Instructions

- 1. Find your container. You can re-use the plastic containers used to hold some fruits or veggies purchased at the store. Wash and dry your container.
- 2. You may need to cover the bottom half of the container with plastic if the gravel rocks are small enough to fall through holes in the container.
- 3. Cover the bottom of the container with $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of gravel. The gravel mimics the bedrock found under the earth's soils and allows excess water to drain from the soil.
- 4. Add a potting soil layer. Your potting soil should be moist but not dripping wet. You should be able to press it into a clump. When placing it in the terrarium, you can make hills and valleys if you like.
- 5. Place the larger rock(s) for decoration. Does it look like a boulder or a mountain?
- 6. If you have a small plant, make a small hole in the soil and add the plant roots. Succulents will grow from just a leaf stem end buried slightly in the soil.
- 7. Add moss clumps all around your terrarium.
- 8. Place any other objects you found from nature.
- 9. Spray your terrarium with water to provide moisture to the mosses.
- 10. Close the lid and keep your terrarium in a spot out of the direct sun.

Questions

A terrarium is an enclosed environment. It won't need added water. Do you know why?

Describe the three phases of the water cycle in your terrarium: evaporation, condensation and precipitation.

How does temperature affect the water cycle?