

## Decorating Vases as a Therapeutic Gardening Activity



One of the most popular activities in Therapeutic Gardening sessions involves Master Gardeners sharing flowers from their own gardens. Clients love to see and smell the many blooms, admire the beautiful colors, and talk about their own past gardens. An added bonus – decorating a vase and selecting some of those flowers to enjoy in their apartments. This is a fun and easy project - advance preparation is the key to success.



Vase-decorating encourages partnership as one client holds the bottle while the other ties the bow around the neck. This activity is most

successful during summer months when cut flowers are the most plentiful.

### Materials needed:

- Small bottles – one per person, plus a couple extras. It is helpful if bottles are a similar height and neck size
- Decorations for bottle vase. Be imaginative and creative! Decorations can be stickers, small plastic bugs, buttons or misc doo-dads, flowers, lace, beads, cut outs from felt, pipe cleaners (for stems, etc.), foam shapes.
- Ribbon, raffia, lace or rickrack trim to tie around bottle neck.
- Markers – to draw (stems, leaves, clouds or other decorations) on bottles.
- Fresh flowers. Flowers that aren't too large and last at least two days after cutting are good choices.

### Additional helpful supplies for activity leaders:

- Glue dots (preferred) or glue
- Wooden craft sticks, waxed paper if using glue
- Glue gun (to be used only by activity leader)
- Scissors
- Towels/washcloths – stabilizes bottle (lay bottle on towel, easier to tie ribbon and glue things onto bottle if it isn't rolling around)
- Trays, small clear bowls or other containers (one per table) to hold stickers and other items to be glued to vase
- Ruler
- Milk jug or other container for water



### Pre-session:

- Decorate bottle to use as sample.
- Wash bottles, remove labels, using "Goo Gone" or similar product to remove glue residue.
- Pre-cut ribbon and raffia. Two-foot lengths work well for 'Frappuccino-size" bottles.
- Divide stickers, doo-dads and other bottle decorative items onto paper plates, small trays, etc, so that a selection will be available for each table of participants. If stickers come on sheets, cut sheets into sections.
- Trim flower stems to fit bottle vases, remove lower leaves.

An added bonus: The decorated vase can be re-cycled – brought to future sessions for a flower refill!



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