



## A Gift Mom Will Appreciate All Summer Long

Mother's Day is right around the corner and we all want to shower mom with love and appreciation. As a mom myself, I always look forward to and cherish the hand made gifts I receive from my boys. The thought and time my boys put into their gift making means far more to me than any gift they could purchase at the dollar store. And let's be real, that's all they could afford.

Since summer follows Mother's Day, something flowering is always a great gift to make and give. I've been working with my niece and nephew on a Mother's Day gift for their mom, my sister. We are surprising her with a potted morning glory tower. This has been a fun little endeavor spending time together and learning about gardening and working with our hands.

Morning glories seed quickly and are very easy to grow. This makes morning glories a good gift for kiddos to work on. Because morning glories are almost guaranteed to grow, kids will get to see their work flourish and gain some healthy confidence in the garden.

Last week the kids and I started to sow our seeds indoors. I recommend you start sowing your seeds about two weeks before Mother's Day, under grow lights, or in a bright sunny window. Also, if you want to make a variety of potted towers, consider working with the sweet pea too.

The sweet pea is simple to grow and puts on a dramatic showing of delicate fragrant blooms. Both the morning glory and the sweet pea are excellent climbers, perfect for hand made flowering towers and, as I mentioned, the fragrance of the sweet pea is out of this world!

To make your own flowering tower you will need some supplies, tools and time. Give yourself 2 weeks to start your seeds and 2 days to complete the project. There is a twelve-hour drying period needed for quick setting cement to set.

And, don't worry, all of the steps are easy to follow, the materials and tools are inexpensive to buy, simple to use and teach the kiddos many skills- making this a project little ones can help with, learn from and feel very proud to give.

### What You Will Need:

Morning glory and/or sweet pea seeds

16 inch plastic pot(s)

Easy mix cement (12 hours of set time / you will need a bucket, water and stir stick)

2 inch PVC piping

1-inch diameter wooden rod(s)

Small eye screws

Twine

Landscape staples

Soil

Handsaw or PVC cutter

Power drill

### How To Do It:

Using a PVC cutter or saw, cut the PVC pipe 1 inch taller than the pot you use.

If your kids are old enough to do this safely, I suggest getting the cut going and letting them have a few passes with the saw. This way they will have an idea of what they are doing and how it feels. The adult supervising this project will have to do most of the sawing.

Next, read the instructions on the bag of cement and mix per instructions. Again, the adult may have to get it started, but let the little ones mix it 'till it's smooth.

Next step, have the kiddos hold the PVC pipe in the center of the pot and the adult can pour the cement around the pipe 'till it's about 3 inches deep. Allow the cement to set for about 12 hours.

After the cement sets, drill two holes in the sides of the pot, just an inch above the cement. This allows the water drain out of the pot \*\*\*important because we just filled the drain wholes with cement.

Next, insert the wooden rod into the PVC that is set in the cement.

Pour soil into the pot, leaving about 2 inches at the rim of the pot.

Screw 4 eye screws into the top of the rod - evenly spaced.

Cut 4 lengths of twine and tie one end to each eye screw and the other end to a landscape staple.

Insert the landscape staples into the soil and then add more soil to fill the pot. Finally, plant one morning glory at the base of each twine.

Then, with a little water and a lot of love, little seeds or little plants will soar to amazing heights with the most amazing colors all summer long.

What I love most about this gift is that kids get a little taste of working with tools, cement, and hardware and they get a glimpse into gardening. Kids can learn many skills from the art of hand made gift giving and they, just like adults, take great pride in their efforts. It is so much fun to watch them create and perfect their towers and, best of all, watch them present their gifts to their mothers.

Now how sweet is that! Happy Mother's Day!