

Garden Stepping Stones



Materials:

- *Mold* - Purchase a plastic stepping stone mold at a craft shop, and if you like unusual shapes, such as hexagons, that is a great idea! But if you are going for something simpler such as a rectangle, square, or circle, there are cheaper options: plastic plant pot saucers, old cake or pie pans, plastic ice cream buckets, five-gallon utility pails, leftover pizza or cereal boxes, scrap lumber and plywood.
- *Quick-setting concrete* - If you are looking to create a set of stones for a large garden, the best bet is to go to a local home supply shop for a 4 or 8-pound bag. If you are just making a few small stepping stones, you will find "stepping stone concrete" at a craft store.
- *Bucket and paint mixer* - You will need something to mix the concrete in. An old bucket or bowl is ideal, so long as it can be discarded after use. An old spoon or paint mixing stick can be used to stir.
- *Rubber gloves, old newspaper, and a drop cloth* - All of these supplies will ensure that any mess can be easily cleaned up.
- *Nonstick cooking spray or petroleum jelly* - You will use one of these to line the mold. When hardened, the stepping stone will slide out of the mold with no trouble.
- *Mix-ins and embellishments* - To personalize the stone, you will want to add an interesting and colorful embellishment. Possibilities include broken bits of pottery, marbles, small toys, tiles or dice from board games, dried flowers or plant matter, sea glass, sparkles, etc.

Instructions:

- Start by putting newspaper and/or a drop cloth on the ground, ideally outdoors.
- Line the mold or molds with cooking spray or petroleum jelly.
- Mix up the concrete according to instructions on the bag, guesstimating the quantity you will need.
- Pour concrete mix into mold or molds.
- Add embellishments to the top of the concrete. In addition to adding objects to the mold, you may also want to create concrete "casts" (impressions of objects that are then removed from the concrete). One option is to wait until the concrete starts to set, and then have children make hand and/or footprints in the drying concrete. Other interesting impressions can be made with leaves, shells, and other natural objects.
- Allow the stepping stone to dry for at least 24 to 48 hours.
- Remove from the mold and place it in the garden!