Make a kokedama

Each kokedama will have its own form and shape. You can hang it up or display it on a dish.

Lay out all the items you will need:

- a plant (suggestions overleaf)
- peat-free compost
- sphagnum moss
- water
- string
- gardening gloves (put them on)

1. Mix the compost and some of the sphagnum moss. A 3:1 ratio of compost to moss is a good amount.

2. Slowly add water to the compost and knead it to form a firm ball that will hold its shape.

3. Take your plant out of the pot and gently remove most of its compost to reveal the roots.

4. Split your compost ball in half. Then gently pack the two halves back together around the plant’s roots.

5. Lay out your moss. Set the compost ball in the middle.

6. Tie up the moss around the compost ball using the string. Wind it round repeatedly to secure the moss in place.
All about *kokedama*

A *kokedama* is a plant sculpture with its roots suspended in a ball of compost wrapped in moss.

‘Kokedama’ is a Japanese word that directly translates as ‘moss ball’: *koke* means moss and *dama* means ball.

When bonsai trees are removed from their pots, if the roots are left undisturbed, they will start to sprout moss – this is known as *ne-arai*. The moss-covered roots are said to be the inspiration for the first *kokedama* that were created in Japan around 750 years ago. *Kokedama* are also known as ‘the poor man’s bonsai’ or ‘the lazy man’s bonsai’ as they need much less attention to grow.

Both bonsai and *kokedama* embody the principles of the Japanese concept of *wabi-sabi*, which expresses simplicity, warmth, earthiness, acceptance and embracing the irregularity of nature.

*Kokedama* are a very sustainable way to grow plants, as the roots of the plant are wrapped in compost and moss and tied together with string. This means the whole ball can be biodegradable.

These versatile and beautiful plant creations are perfect for every space, as they can be placed on a saucer or hung up.

How to care for your *kokedama*

Each week, soak your *kokedama* in water for five minutes, until it feels heavy.

In summer, soak it twice a week and add a drop of seaweed feed to the water.

Keep an eye on your plant and when it gets bigger you might like to pot it on into a larger *kokedama*. If so, go to step 1...

Sphagnum moss

*Kokedama* require the use of sphagnum moss. Ensure the moss you are buying is from a sustainable source. Sphagnum moss is vital to forming peat bogs as it stores water and prevents dead plants from decaying – it can soak up more than eight times its own weight in water. There are over 30 species of sphagnum moss in the UK, ranging in colour from green to pink and orange. To find out more, read our blog about moss on [kew.org/read-and-watch/moss](http://kew.org/read-and-watch/moss).

Choosing the plant

**Indoor plants:**
- *Echeveria elegans*
- *Oxalis triangularis*
- *Peperomia caperata ‘Quito’*
- *Ceropegia woodii*

**Outdoor plants:**
- *Cyclamen*
- *Narcissus bulbs*
- *Hedera helix*
- *Gaultheria procumbens*

**Edibles:**
- *Strawberries*
- *Thyme*
- *Rosemary*
- *Oregano*

We are passionate about growing plants. We want you to be too! Find out more about Kew’s community programmes at [kew.org/community-horticulture](http://kew.org/community-horticulture).

Please share your growing adventure with us! Tag [@KewGardens](https://twitter.com/KewGardens) with photos of your *kokedama*.

Come and see Kew’s amazing Bonsai House for inspiration, or read about Kew’s Bonsai Collection on our website at [kew.org/kew-gardens/plants/bonsai-collection](http://kew.org/kew-gardens/plants/bonsai-collection).