How to Make an Egg Carton Caterpillar

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Last Updated: October 21, 2021

Instead of throwing away an empty egg carton, why not turn it into a caterpillar? All you need are scissors, paint, pipe cleaners, and a little bit of imagination. You can even read books about caterpillars while crafting, and learn something new about these cute critters!

Things You'll Need

■ Making a Simple Caterpillar

- ☐ Cardboard egg carton
- ☐ Acrylic paint
- ☐ Marker
- ☐ Paintbrush
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Pipe cleaners
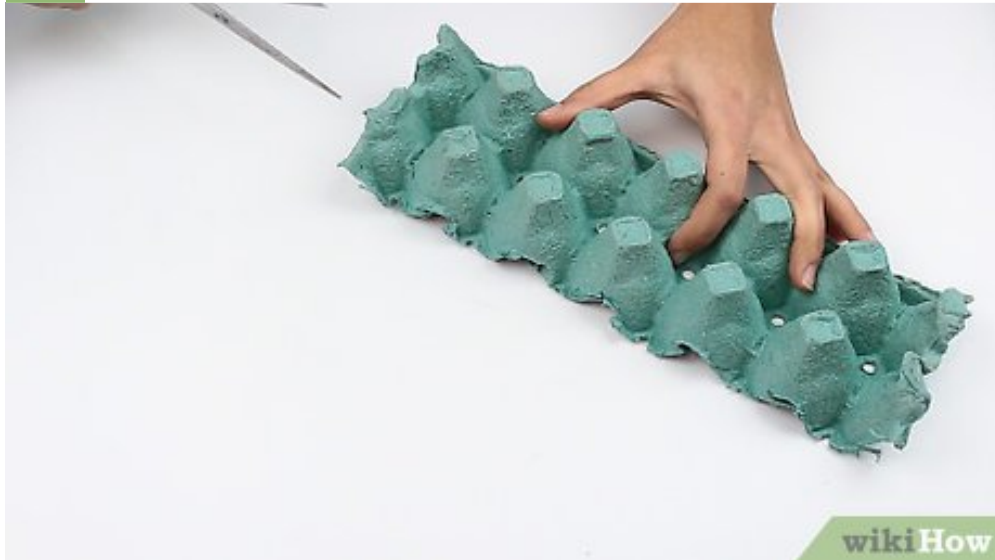- ☐ Googly eyes and pompoms (optional)
- ☐ Glue

■ Making a Wiggly Caterpillar

- ☐ Cardboard egg carton
- ☐ Acrylic paint
- ☐ Marker
- ☐ Paintbrush
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Pipe cleaners
- ☐ Googly eyes and pompoms (optional)
- ☐ Glue

■ Making a Planter Caterpillar

- ☐ Cardboard egg carton
- ☐ Acrylic paint
- ☐ Marker
- ☐ Paintbrush
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Pipe cleaners
- ☐ Googly eyes and pompoms (optional)
- ☐ Glue
- ☐ Dirt
- ☐ Spoon
- ☐ Grass seeds

1 **Cut apart an egg carton into rows.** Cut the lid and flaps off of an egg carton first. Next, cut it straight down the middle so that you have two rows of egg cups. Set one of those strips aside for another project.

- A 12 or 18-cup egg carton will work better than a 6-cup egg carton, otherwise you'll get a very short caterpillar.

- Use scissors to trim off any sharp corners from the cups so that they are nice and smooth.[1]

2 **Paint the outside of the egg cup strip.** Flip the strip over so that you can see the outside of the cups. Paint it using acrylic paint, tempera paint, or poster paint. You can paint it all one color, or many different colors. You can even paint one end red, and the rest of it green to make it a "very hungry" caterpillar. Let the caterpillar dry before moving on.

3 **Punch two holes in the first cup.** Choose an end to be the head, then poke two holes in the middle for the antenna. You can do this with a pair of scissors or a pencil. Younger children may need help with this step.[2]

- If you made a "very hungry" caterpillar, the red end is the head.

- You can paint the inside of the caterpillar if you want to.

4 **Cut a pipe cleaner in half, then poke it through the holes.** Flip the caterpillar over so that you can see the inside. Cut a pipe cleaner in half. Poke each end through a hole.[3]

- Set the other half of the pipe cleaner aside for another project.

5 **Twist the pipe cleaner to make the antenna.** Turn the caterpillar back over. Twist the pipe cleaner once, then spread it open to make a V. Decorate the pipe cleaners by gluing a pompom to the ends. You can also curl the ends over a pencil instead.[4]

- If the antenna are too long, cut them shorter.

6 **Give the caterpillar a face.** Glue two googly eyes onto the front end, just below the antenna. Use a marker to draw a smile below the eyes. If you don't have any googly eyes, you can draw the eyes on instead.[5]
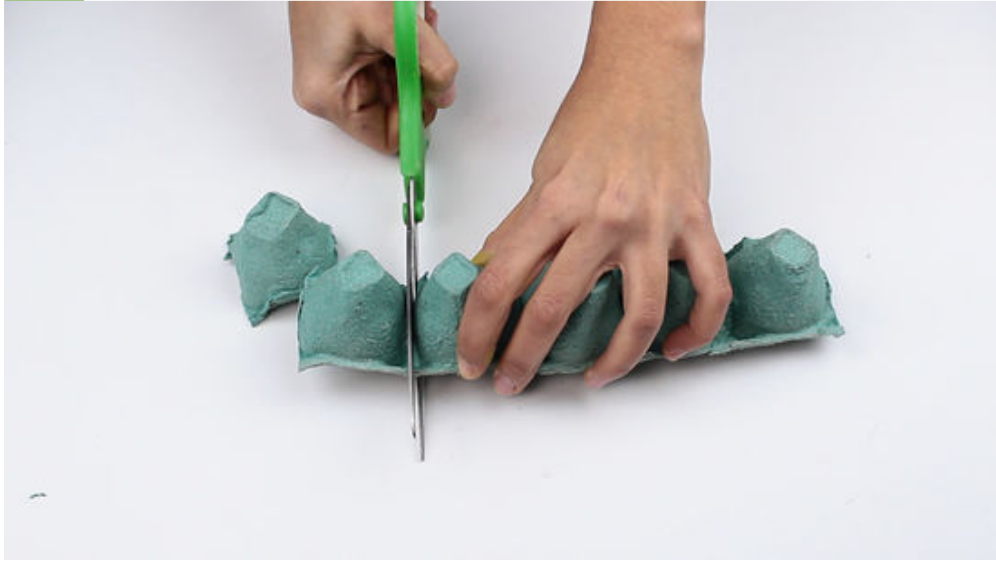
7 **Give it some pipe cleaner legs, if desired.** Cut some pipe cleaners into thirds. Stick two mini pipe cleaners into each cup (except for the head). Tape the pipe cleaners in place, one on each side of every cup. Bend the pipe cleaners into an L shape, if desired.[6]

- How many pipe cleaners you cut depends on how many cups make up your caterpillars body.

8 **Decorate the caterpillar further.** Let your imagination run wild! Paint spots or stripes on to it. Glue some pompoms down its back. Give it a goofy tongue, eyelashes, or a nose. Bend its antenna into a new shape. The possibilities are endless!

**Method 2 of 3:
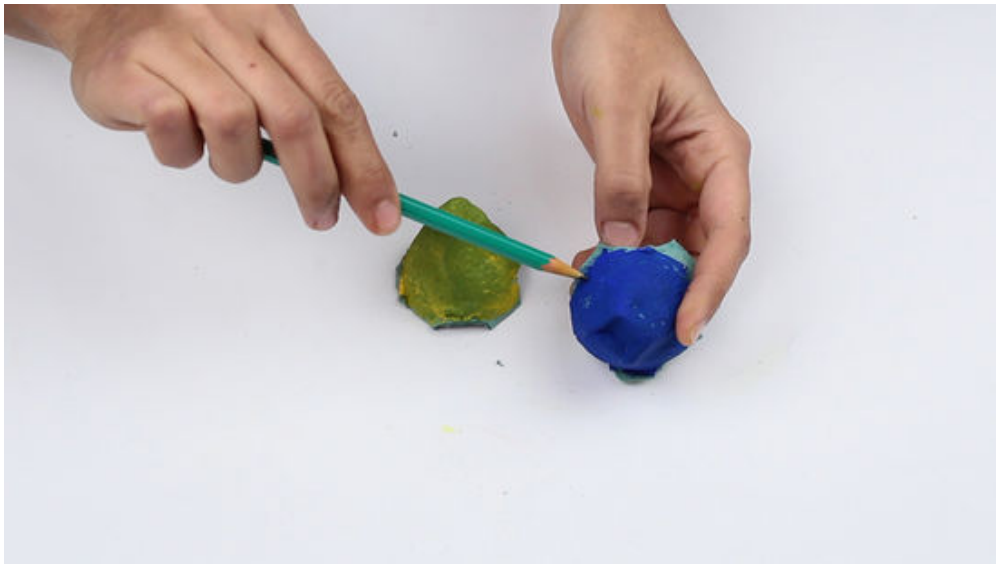Making a Wiggly Caterpillar**

1 **Cut off six, individual cups from an egg carton.** Cut the lid and flaps off of an egg carton first. Next, cut off six cups from the carton. Cut them apart so that you have six separate cups.[7]

- You will connect the cups with string. This will allow the caterpillar to wiggle.

- Neaten up the edges of the cups with a pair of scissors. The caterpillar will wiggle more if they are rounded and don't have corners.

2 **Paint the cups, then let them dry.** You can paint all of them the same color, or different colors. If you want to make a "very hungry" caterpillar, paint one cup red, and the rest green. Let the paint dry before moving on.[8]

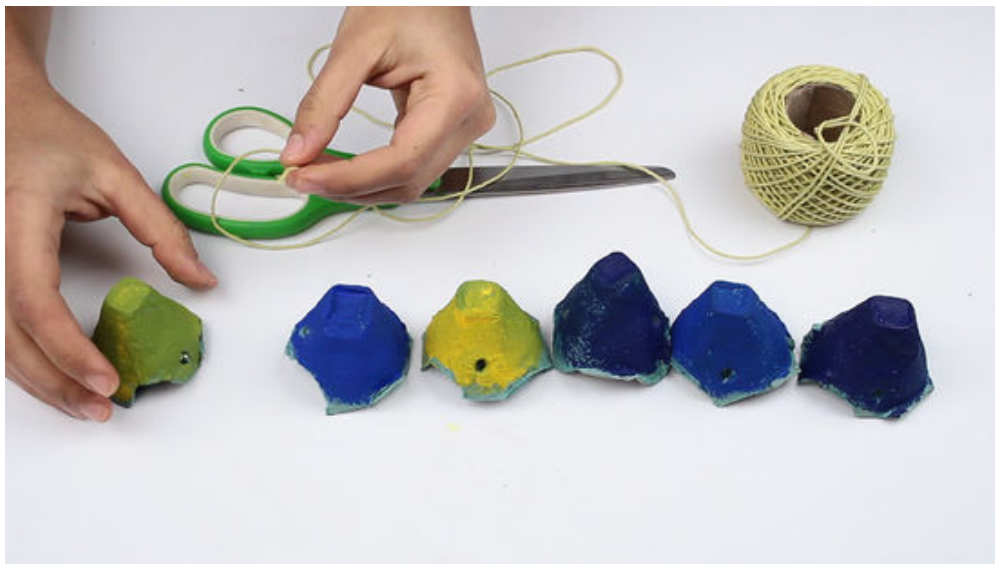- Acrylic paint, tempera paint, or poster paint will work the best.

3 **Punch a single hole in the first two cups.** Use scissors or a pencil to poke a hole in the first cup along one of the four top edges. Do the same thing for the second cup. The holes need to be about ¼ to ½ inch (0.5 to 1 centimeter) down from the edge. These will make the head and tail of the caterpillar.[9]

- Young children may need and adult's help for this step.

- If you made a "very hungry" caterpillar, use a red cup and a green cup for this step.

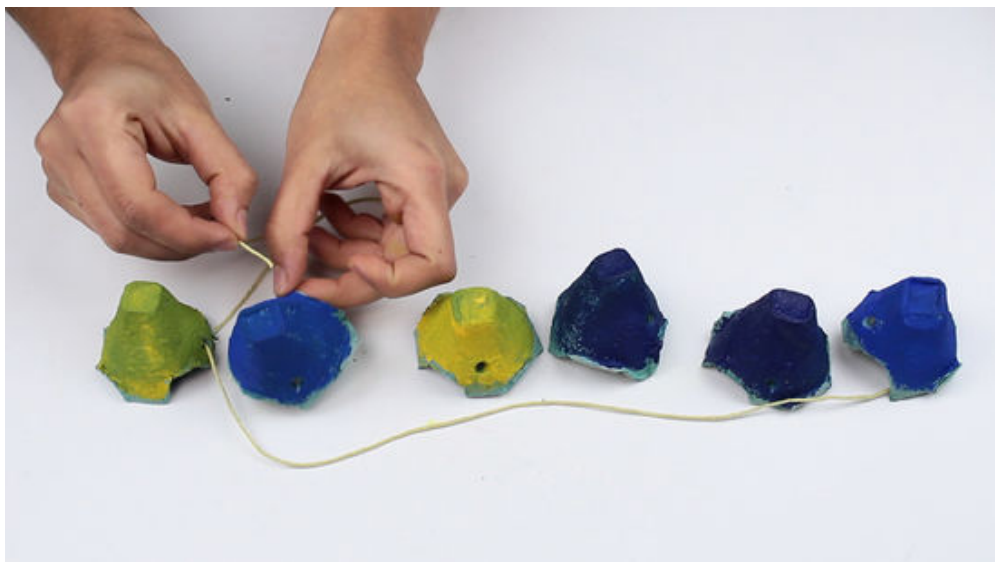- Make sure that the holes match up. They should be in the center of the edge.

4 **Poke two holes in the next four cups.** This time, poke the holes straight across from each other. You will need one hole on the left side edge, and another hole for the right side edge. These will make the body pf the caterpillar.[10]
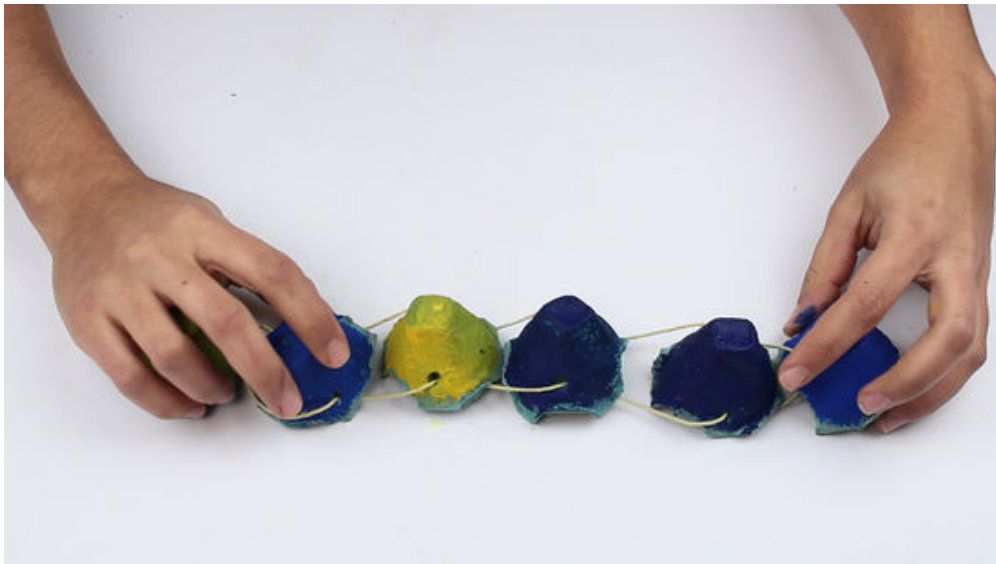
- Make sure that the holes are aligned.

5 **Thread your first cup onto a piece of string or yarn.** Cut a piece of string that's longer than all six cups put together. Tie a knot at one end, then thread it through a yarn needle. Take one of your single-hole cups, and push the needle through it.[11]

- Make sure that the needle comes out on the outside.

- If the knot falls out of the hole, tie a bead around the end of the string instead.
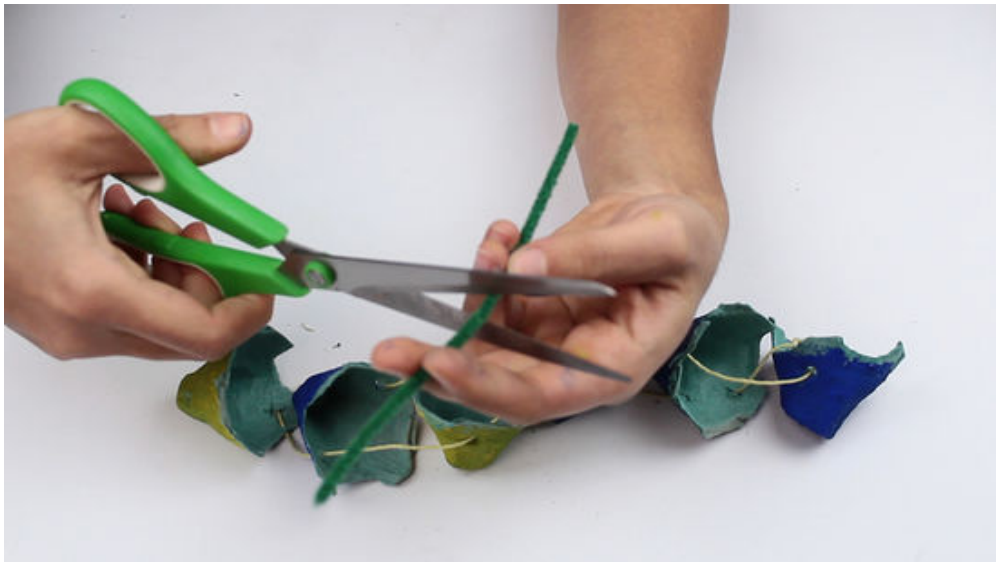
6 **Add the rest of the cups, then tie the string off.** Thread the two-hole cups onto the string. Finish off with the other single-hole cup. Tie another knot at the end of the string.[12]
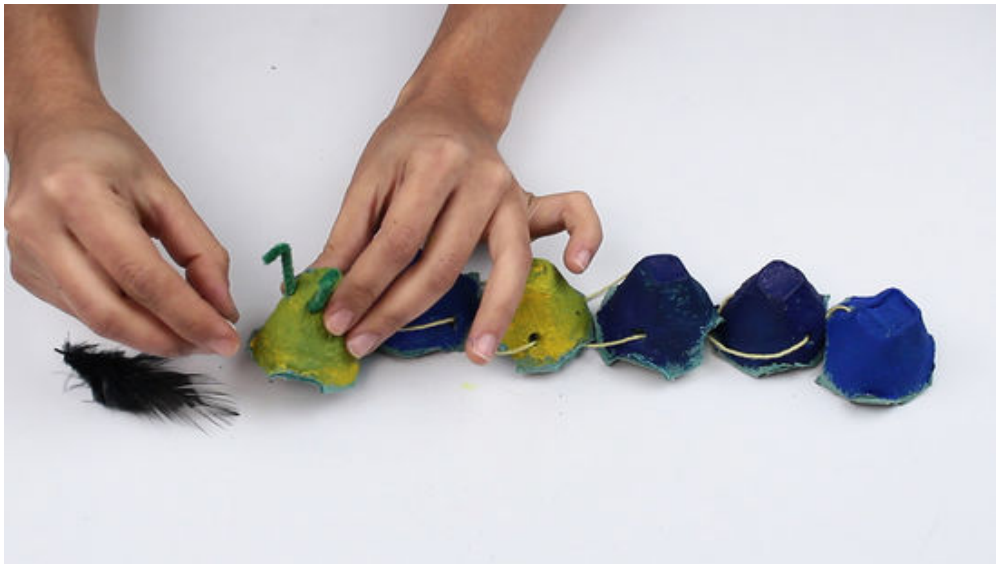
- If you have any string left over, cut it off.

7 **Poke two holes in the head for the antenna.** Flip the caterpillar over so that you can see the bottoms of the cups. Choose an end to be the head. Use a pair of sharp scissors or a pencil to poke two holes in the top of the head.[13]

- If you made a "very hungry" caterpillar, the red end is the head.

8 **Cut a pipe cleaner in half, then feed it through the holes.** Flip the caterpillar over so that you can see the inside. Poke each end of the cut pipe cleaner through a hole. Flip the caterpillar back over, then twist the ends of the pipe cleaner together. Spread open the pipe cleaner to make a V. Save the other half of the pipe cleaner for another project.[14]

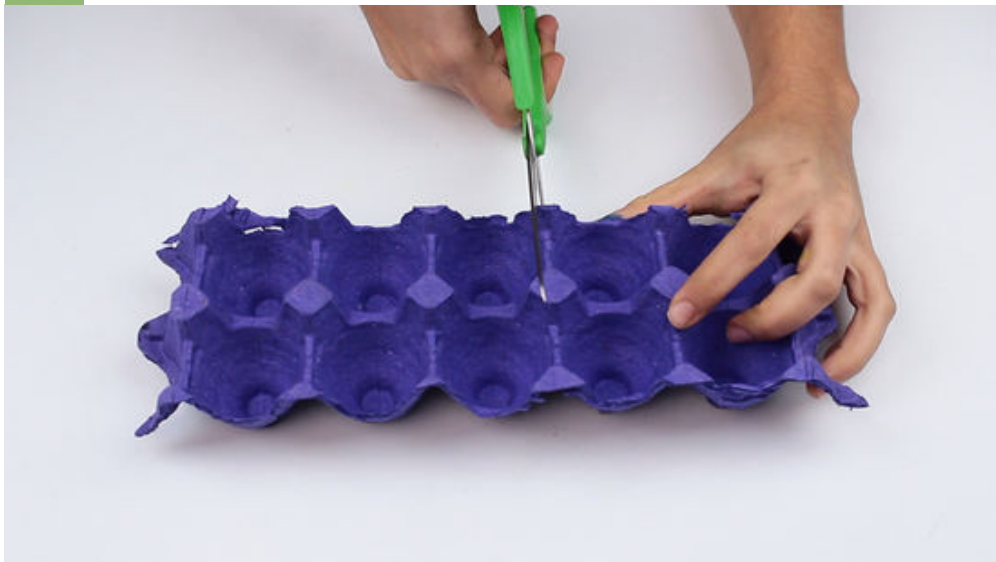- If the antenna are still too long, cut them down with scissors.

9 **Decorate the caterpillar.** Draw a face onto the head, just below the antenna. Use a pencil to curl the antenna, or glue pompoms to the tips. Here are some more ways to decorate the caterpillar:

- Glue a pompom to the top of each cup.

- Glue on googly eyes instead of drawing them.

- Paint spots or stripes onto the caterpillar.

- Draw on some eyelashes, eyebrows, or a silly tongue.

Method 3 of 3:
Making a Planter Caterpillar

1 **Cut apart an egg carton.** Choose an egg carton with deep cups that are all connected. Avoid the ones with "prongs" in the middle. Cut the lid and side flaps off of the egg carton. Next, cut the carton down the middle so that you have two strips.

- A 12-cup egg carton will work the best, but you can use a smaller one too.

- This method will turn your caterpillar into a flower pot for small seeds, such as grass.

- Trim the excess cardboard away from each cup so that the edges are nice and smooth.

2 **Paint the outside of the cups.** Flip the strip over so that you can see the bottom and outside of the cups. Paint the cups a bright color. Acrylic paint will work the best, but you can use poster and tempera paint too.[15]

- Paint the inside of the cups with clear, waterproof, acrylic sealer to keep the caterpillar from getting soggy.

3 **Poke two holes into the edge of the strip for the antenna.** Turn the strip so that the inside is facing you. Punch two holes into one of the narrow ends of the strip, close to the top. You can do this with scissors or a pencil.[16]

4 **Cut a pipe cleaner in half, then feed it through the holes to make the antenna.** Feed the pipe cleaner through the inside of the cup, so that it comes out the front. Twist the ends together, then bend them upwards. Spread the pipe cleaner apart to make a V shape. Glue a small pompom to the tips, or curl them with a pencil.

- If the antenna are still too long for you, cut them shorter.

5 **Give the caterpillar a face.** Glue two googly eyes to the front of the strip, just below the pipe cleaner antenna. Use a marker to draw a small face beneath the eyes.[17]

- If you don't have googly eyes, you can draw the eyes instead.

- Add lashes to make the caterpillar a girl.

6 **Fill the cups with damp dirt.** Get some soil from the garden or a flower nursery. Add enough water to make it damp. Use a spoon to fill each cup with soil, about ¼-inch (0.5 centimeter) from the rim.[18]

7 **Sprinkle grass seeds over the dirt.** You want to use a pinch of seeds for each cup in case they don't all grow. You can also try herbs, like basil or chives.[19]

8 **Cover the seeds with more dirt, then let them grow!** Remember to water the seeds often. If you planted grass, you need to water them every day. Do not water them too much, or the caterpillar will get soggy and fall apart.[20]

- The caterpillar will eventually fall apart. When that happens, cut the cups apart and plant them in your garden.

- If you used grass, use scissors to give the caterpillar a haircut!

- If you have a cat, be aware that he or she may try to eat the grass.

💡 Tips

- If you can't wait for the glue to dry, use hot glue to attach pompoms and googly eyes.

- Read other books about caterpillars while the children craft.

- Decorate your caterpillar with glitter glue. If you don't have any, draw designs with glue, then sprinkle glitter onto it.[21]

- Decorate your caterpillar with pompoms and foam stickers.[22]

- Read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* aloud while the children make the craft.[23]

References

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Co-authors: **10**
Updated: **October 21, 2021**
Views: **93,565**

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