

**Aims:**

Discover if and how the Wardian case (a Terrarium) worked.

You will need:

- Plastic drinks bottle
- Scissors
- Sellotape
- Soil
- Small plant

The Wardian case (now known as a Terrarium) was a sealed glass container with soil in the bottom.

Instructions:

1. Use a large empty clear plastic drinks bottle e.g. cola bottle
2. Cut the bottle in half.
3. Pour soil/compost into the bottom half of the bottle.
4. Plant a small plant into the soil.
5. Re-attach the top half of the bottle, overlapping the two sections and seal the join with sticky tape.
6. Place the bottle in a sunny location.
7. See how long your plant can survive in the sealed case.

The moisture produced by the plant should condense on the plastic bottle walls and provide enough water to keep the plant alive.

Observe and see if your plant survives for the several months equivalent to a journey at sea.

Try planting different species of plants to see if any survive better than others.

**Handy notes:**

The Wardian case made it possible to send live plants - discovered on explorations in far-away lands - back home.

Plants in Wardian cases were put on the ships decks to get sunlight and the condensed moisture in the case kept them watered.

The case protected them from salt spray and damage.

The original cases were made from wood and glass.

Read more:

<https://www.kew.org/read-and-watch/the-wardian-case-a-history-of-plant-transportation>

Do more:

- Research who invented the Wardian case and when.