

How to make Kokedama

Kokedama is Japanese for 'moss balls'. A fun if fiddly, creative art of creating a display of living colour—indoors or outdoors. Hang using string, create a table centrepiece or tuck into a nook for a surprise!

What you will need:

- **Small plant**
- **Bonsai soil or mixture of clay 85% and peat moss 15%**
- **Sphagnum moss** (both sphagnum moss and bonsai soil available in garden centres)
- **String and scissors**
- **Water and 2 containers for mixing**



Step 1

Adding a little at a time, mix water with soil until it makes a sticky consistency that you can roll a ball of soil.

Slightly soak the moss in a separate container.

Prepare plant by removing excess compost from its roots.



Step 1 Prepare ingredients

Step 2

Form a ball of soil by rolling and pressing firmly using the cup shape of your hands.

Add more water to the soil if the ball doesn't hold its shape very well.

The size of the ball is in proportion to the overall size of the plant. No right or wrong size!



Step 2 Make ball of soil

Step 3

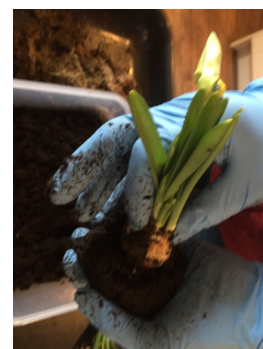
Using your finger, poke a hole in the centre of the ball big enough to hold the roots of your plant.

Reform the ball shape if it cracks a wee bit.

Gently place the roots (or bulb) into the hole, holding the ball firmly then pressing the soil firmly again into shape around the roots.



Step 3 Poke a hole in the centre of ball





How to make Kokedama

Step 4 Now the really fiddly bit.

Holding the soil ball in one hand, start wrapping moss around the ball, firming as you go. Damper moss seems to hold together better.

This does get easier with practice!



Step 5

Taking a length of string (or ribbon for extra colour perhaps) tightly wrap the string around the ball covering as much area as possible. Perhaps an extra pair of hands would be helpful here.

Ensure string is pulled taut.

Secure at top of ball, leaving a length of string if intended to be used as a hanging feature.

Step 5 Secure string around ball

Step 6 Have fun placing your kokedama!

Notes Choose plants that are appropriate to the light conditions where they are going to be placed and ones that prefer damp soil. Ferns and ivy are ideal. Avoid succulents as they like drier conditions.

Depending on the climate and location, your kokedama may dry out quite quickly so 'mist' with a water spray gun every few days. This is especially so if kept indoors, in a sunny site or close to a heating source.

Avoid letting the ball completely dry out, and again, depending on the plant variety you have chosen, it may require a good watering. As the moss dries out, it will turn a paler green/grey colour.

You'll soon get to know the feel of the weight of your kokedama when it needs to have a water. To water, plunge your kokedama into a bucket of room temperature water (do not submerge the stem of the plant upwards) for 2-3 minutes. Allow to drip for 5 minutes before rehang.

Your plant may need fed during the active growing spring/summer months. Add half strength of your normal plant food to the 'plunge pail' when you soak the kokedama.

Kokedama can be 'mossed balled' on every two years if required, into a bigger ball.

Enjoy Japanese gardening!



Step 4 Wrap moss around soil ball



Step 6 Find a space that needs brightening up!