



# Tu B'Shevat

## New Year of the Trees

In 2021, Tu B'Shevat begins at sundown on Wednesday, January 27 and goes through the evening of Thursday, January 28.

Tu B'Shevat is considered the New Year of the Trees. It marks the start of spring in Israel, when trees begin to bloom after a long, cold winter. The holiday is observed on the 15th (Tu) of the Hebrew month of Shevat. Tu B'Shevat is often referred to as Jewish Arbor Day, but with today's keen environmental awareness, it has also become something of a Jewish Earth Day. Today, many people mark this holiday with a meal that evokes the Passover seder, where fruits, nuts, and wine or grape juice are on the menu. Besides the seder, many families spend Tu B'Shevat planting a tree, working in a garden, eating special fruit, or doing something else to show some love for trees and the earth.

In this kit you'll find activities your family can do to celebrate Tu B'Shevat at home. Starting the week of January 18, you can also check out some **online content featuring Rabbi Hersh and other surprises at [testl.org/holidays-at-home](https://testl.org/holidays-at-home)**.

Note: If you have a child in religious school, your bag has a ziploc with juice and some food. You'll want to **save the food and juice for the Tu B'Shevat seder we are doing as a school live on Zoom on January 24**. The rest of the activities can be done any time you want!

If you have questions, feel free to email Emily Cohen, TE's Director of Education & Community Engagement at [emily@testl.org](mailto:emily@testl.org).

For more Tu B'Shevat resources visit:

[ReformJudaism.org](https://ReformJudaism.org)

[18Doors.org](https://18Doors.org)

[PJLibrary.org](https://PJLibrary.org)

*Happy Tu B'Shevat from Temple Emanuel!*



# Planting Directions

Tu B'Shevat celebrates nature and trees, so what better way than to roll your sleeves up and do some planting! The more of this project your kids do themselves, the more they'll get out of it. So I recommend laying out some newspaper and letting them get messy! This kit has three different things you can plant. The mesclun lettuce is delicious and grows quickly. The parsley can be used for your Passover seder later this spring. The parsley takes much longer than the lettuce, so this is an opportunity to teach your children about patience. If you plant it around Tu B'Shevat in January, it should be ready in time for Passover in March. The cardboard earth cutout is actually seed paper. Wildflower seeds are hidden inside it!

## Mesclun Lettuce

1. Place pot on a disposable plate or something else to catch the soil and water that slip through the bottom
2. Fill the pot about  $\frac{3}{4}$  full with the soil
3. Sprinkle the seeds on top and cover them with a thin layer of soil ( $\frac{1}{4}$  inch or less)
4. Place the pot in a sunny windowsill and water daily
5. You should see sprouts emerge between 5 and 10 days after you plant. When they look big enough to eat, harvest them and enjoy!
6. Lettuce can grow back if you trim the mature parts (cut off the part you would normally eat, leaving the bottom part of the leaf), leave the rest, and continue to water

## Parsley

1. Soak the seeds in water for 12-24 hours before planting them
2. Place pot on a disposable plate or something else to catch the soil and water that slip through the bottom
3. Fill the pot about  $\frac{3}{4}$  full with the soil
4. Sprinkle the seeds on top and cover them with a thin layer of soil ( $\frac{1}{4}$  inch or less)
5. Place the pot in a sunny windowsill and water daily
6. You should see sprouts emerge between 14 and 28 days after you plant. When they look big enough to eat, harvest them and enjoy!

## Seed Paper (Earth Cutout)

*This works better outside, so you'll want to wait until spring to plant this.*

1. Soak earth in water overnight
2. Tear up and plant outside under a thin layer of soil
3. Water daily until seeds germinate in 1-3 weeks



# Craft Directions



1.

pikadillycharm.blogspot.com

This project is more about the process than the end product! Sit back, let your child do as much of this project themselves as possible. Twisting the trunk and branches helps children develop their fine motor skills. Exploring shapes and movement will help your child develop their creativity and will result in a unique tree that they can feel ownership of. Don't forget to recycle when you're done displaying your tree!



2.

pikadillycharm.blogspot.com



3.

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1. Cut lunch bag into half inch strips. Start at the opening and cut half way down the bag (A grown-up will probably need to do this step for younger children)

2. Open bag and stand it up

3. Hold base of bag with one hand and twist the middle of bag to create the trunk of the tree



4.

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4. (Example of finished trunk)



5.

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5. Twist two of the bag strips together to create branches

6. (Example of finished branches)



6.

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7.

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7. Use the stickers to add leaves to branches

Source: <https://pikadillycharm.blogspot.com/2011/11/paper-bag-fall-tree.html>



# Science Experiment

Create the four seasons in your own kitchen! This activity will help children learn the cycle of the four seasons as well as explore mixing colors. Tu B'Shevat happens in the dead of winter here in Missouri. But in Israel, spring is coming and trees are starting to bloom. In this activity, you'll recreate the turning of spring and enjoy some yummy grape juice at the end!

A Tu B'Shevat seder, similar to the Passover seder, is a ritual some Jews do to celebrate Tu B'Shevat. The seder includes four glasses of wine or grape juice. The first glass starts out pure white and the glasses get progressively darker until the fourth glass, which is pure red. For the seder, and for this experiment, you'll need:

- white grape juice
- red grape juice
- four small cups (clear cups work best but anything will do)

1. Pour one glass of only white grape juice. This glass symbolizes the stillness and dormancy of winter. Look out your window and ask your child why they think the trees and plants need a rest in the winter? You're not looking for a particular answer here, this is to get them thinking deeply about the nature around them.

2. For the second glass, pour mostly white, then add a few drops of red. What happens to the color? This symbolizes the start of spring and the earth "waking up." With this cup, we recognize the gradual and orderly turning of the seasons, the background against which we lead our lives. As we read in our sacred text, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven." (Eccl. 3:1)

3. The third glass should be 1/3 white and 2/3 red. This symbolizes spring overtaking winter and the rush of new colors in the landscape. Ask your child what they hope to see, hear, smell, feel, and taste as spring comes this year.

4. The fourth glass is all red. It symbolizes the full arrival of spring and the vibrant life of a new season.

As the spring comes this year, refer back to this activity as you watch things bloom and as you hear and see birds and other animals return to your neighborhood.