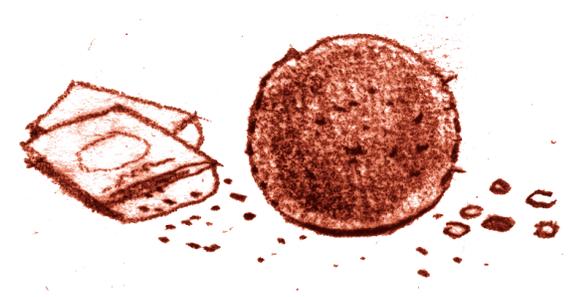


SPRING *Art & Nature Activity*

SEED- BOMBS



MATERIALS

- NATIVE WILDFLOWER SEEDS
- POTTERS CLAY, OR HARVEST LOCAL CLAY IF AVAILABLE
- SCREENED COMPOST OR ORGANIC SEED-STARTING MIX
- WATER
- TUB TO MIX INGREDIENTS
- BOX OR PAPER BAGS TO DRY AND STORE SEED BOMBS

TIME

Making Seed Bombs: Approximately 30 min.

Distributing the Seeds: Up to you! (could be incorporated into a hike)

OBJECTIVE

This activity is educational, but most of all it's fun! Creating seed bombs makes for a messy, muddy, and enjoyable task. Later, throwing the creations around outside is a hoot, plus kids learn about native plants, reseeding, and their local environment throughout the whole process. It is very simple to create seed bombs and is a great way to propagate local seed. Children will really enjoy planting this way and will be delighted with the prospect of seeing something they've sown begin to grow. Conveniently this project is suited for a rainy day (the clay breaks down with rain and the seeds receive their first watering). Make the seed bombs inside, then grab your raincoats and get ready to toss. Plant wildflowers along roads, over fences, abandoned lots, spread flowers in your yard. Have fun- the sky's the limit.

BACKGROUND

Seed-bombs are usually used to reseed natural areas that are difficult to seed otherwise. The usual way of reseeding ("broadcasting" seed on top of the soil) challenges seeds with wind, sunburn, flooding, and wildlife grazing. Seed bombs, on the other hand, combat all these issues with their protective and nourishing casing,

When a seed bomb lands on the soil, its protective coating keeps the seeds safe until the right circumstances for growing arise. Dew and rain meets the clay, and is drawn in to provide moisture to the seeds within. The seeds will germinate and evolve into seedlings, reaching down into the soil while the clay breaks down around it. This process allows the compost to nourish the new plants, and for the roots to reach the ground. By this point the seedlings should be firmly rooted in the ground and be off to a good start, as they continue on their own.

The history of the seed bomb is unknown (some say Japan or Greece). However, it is also said that some Native American tribes traditionally packed their corn kernels in clumps of mud from streams in order to protect their seeds from drought and birds. No matter the original inventor, these seed clumps are now used all over the world. In fact, “Guerilla gardeners” use seed bombs to re-plant landscapes that otherwise would be barren. These little throwable clumps can transform an environment that has been abused or exploited. They also provide a method of reseeding for farmers, in a way that won't disturb the ground or preexisting crops.

If all goes well, once the new plants “take”, they will produce shade and conditions to allow more plants to grow. As the plants produce and drop their own seed to the ground, they will establish a seeding and regrowth cycle that establishes a healthy plant population in the area. It is for this reason that we give thought to the type of plants we choose to propagate, and why native species are the way to go.

A seed bomb contains everything a little seed needs to start off their life. They can be kept for years before planting, and also make nice gifts.

STEPS

CHOOSING SEEDS:

Consider the area you want to be planting in, and the conditions the plant you've chosen requires. If you're throwing the seed bombs into wild areas, make sure the seeds are native. Try to find varieties that are diminished or in trouble. This is a great opportunity for children to learn about local plant varieties and the local ecosystem.

* avoid plants that are invasive!

Some ideas for planting include perennial flowers in a place that needs beautification and pollinators, or herbs for people and insects. Seed bombs can also be a handy way to plant in the garden, as they are low maintenance and planting them won't disrupt what's already growing.

RECIPE:

- 1 parts potting soil
- 1 part screened compost or organic seed-starting mix
- 5 parts clay
- 1-2 parts water
- 1-2 parts native seeds of your choice

In a tub, mix together the soil, clay, and compost. Gradually add 1 part water and mix it around (children will enjoy getting hands-on here). Make sure there are no clumps and slowly add more water until the texture becomes thick, like molding clay/dough.

At this stage, add your seeds in and keep mashing the mixture around to incorporate them. Add more water if needed, to reach a good consistency. If it feels crumbly when rolled, it is too dry.

Now children can each take a small clump of the muck and roll it into golf-ball sized bombs, setting them aside onto some cardboard or newspaper for a day or to (out of direct sun). Allow them to dry completely.

Store your seed bombs in a cardboard box or paper bag (not plastic). When sowing your seeds, simply toss (or place) them into the area you wish. This is a great thing to do on a rainy day (although not imperative). There's no need to water them, or bury them. Mother nature will take it from here!

POEMS

LITTLE BROWN SEEDS

Little brown seeds so small and round,
Are sleeping quietly under ground.
Down come the raindrops
sprinkle, sprinkle, sprinkle.
Out comes the rainbow,
twinkle, twinkle, twinkle.
Little brown seeds way down below,
Up through the earth they grow, grow, grow.
Little green leaves come one by one.
They hold up their heads and look at the sun.

LITTLE SEED

A little seed for me to sow.
A little earth to make it grow.
A little hole, a little pat,
a little wish, and that is that.
A little sun, a little shower,
a little while, and then a flower.

GARDEN SONG

BLESSING

Mother Earth, Mother Earth!
Take our seed and give it birth.

Sister Rain, Sister Rain!
Shed thy tears to swell the grain.

Father Sun! Gleam and glow!
Until the roots begin to grow.

Brother Wind! Breathe and blow
Then the blade green will grow.

Earth and Sun, Wind and Rain!
Turn to gold the living Grain.

SOURCES

- www.canteach.ca/elementary/songspoems22.html
- www.rodalorganiclife.com/garden/diy-seed-bombs
- www.gardeningknowhow.com/special/children/making-seed-bombs.htm