



Pollinators



This month is all about pollinators! Pollinators are very important to the food we eat, plant reproduction, and much more. Evidence shows that pollinators are declining. One of the main reasons for this decline is habitat loss. To help give pollinators more habitat we are going to be making Seed Balls! Seed Balls are 3/4"-1" balls of soil, clay, and seeds. These little seed capsules contain everything the seeds need to germinate! Once they are placed or tossed, they are designed to take root and grow to maturity with little to no extra care.



-A little history:

Seed balls are thought to go way back to Ancient Egyptian culture where the Egyptians would use them to plant the banks of the Nile River after flooding. Other cultures have used them after that and most recently they have been used in bare city areas to help with area beautification.



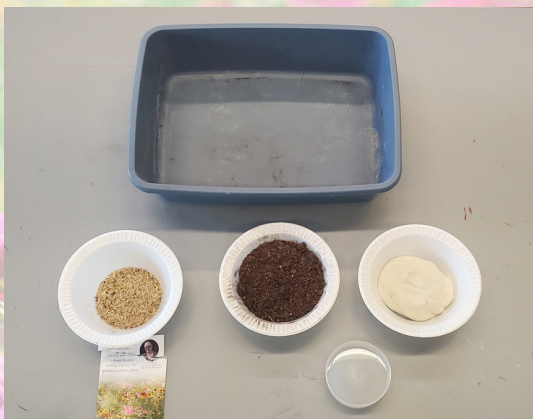
Indoor Activity:

For this activity, we will be making the seed balls for use in your own yards or property to help promote pollinators! Some things to think about when making and planting your seed balls is: Only Plant native species to your region. Do not plant invasive plants that can use up

all of the food of native plants. With a quick internet search you will be able to find the pollinator species that are native to your region of the country.

Supplies Needed

- o Container to mix ingredients.
- o Newspaper or Cardboard
- o Compost or Potting Soil
- o Air Dry Clay
- o Water
- o Seeds



How To Make the Seed Balls:

- Add equal parts compost or soil and clay.



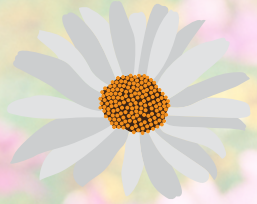
- Add a small amount of water to make the clay and soil stick together better



- Next, mix the clay, soil and water together



Once mixed, form into small to medium sized balls about 3/4 to 1 inch in diameter. While forming into individual balls, add the seeds and knead until the seeds are evenly mixed.



Place the formed seed balls on the cardboard or line the container with newspaper to dry.



Once dry, you can either store them until ready to plant or you can jump down to the outdoor portion of this activity guide and we will show you how to plant them!



-OUTDOOR:

For the outdoor activity this month we are going to plant the seed balls that we just created! To plant them, just toss them in the area you have chosen and it will do the rest! The clay keeps the seeds safe from birds and other seed-eating critters and the soil provides the food!



Some tips for making the seeds grow better are:

- Follow the instructions on the seed package for when the best time is to plant
- Plant the seed balls before a rain
- Make sure the danger of frost for the season has passed
- Don't plant them in the heat of the day



-What can you Do?

To help with pollinators in your area, here are some things you can do, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

- You can plant a pollinator garden
 - A pollinator garden is full of plants that pollinators are attracted to for the nectar. While feeding on the nectar they will also pick up pollen and spread it to other plants, pollinating them!
- Provide habitat by leaving downed logs and trees
 - Downed logs and trees can provide habitat for the pollinators to lay their eggs and build nests.
- Use less pesticides or be very precise where they are used
 - Pesticides can't tell the difference between good animals and harmful animals. Both good insects like pollinators, along with harmful insects that may hurt the plants, are killed with pesticides. Using no pesticides is best, but if you need to use them, be sure to only use it where you absolutely need it. This keeps it from going where it shouldn't be and harming the pollinators!

