

Virtual Monarch and Meadow Month Activity: Seed Bombs

This activity can be done inside or outside and is meant to be a fun way to disperse seeds in your yard.

Seed bombs are an interactive way to scatter wildflower seeds! This is a hands-on activity that lets everyone get their hands dirty. While any time is the right time to help support monarchs and other wildlife by establishing new milkweed plants and wildflowers, the process of growing plants may take a while - it is a natural process, after all! But if you begin creating your seed bombs now, you will be ready for the prime autumn seed dispersal period when rainfall helps the process (early spring is also a great time). Using organic materials and native seed, participants will learn to make seed bombs. A seed bomb, or seed ball, is a fun way to help plant native plants as they can be thrown distances into areas that can be enhanced by native species.



Organic Seed Bomb Recipe:

- Organic clay (try and shop locally, and make sure it states “*organic*” on the package)
- Soil (compost or *organic* soil only)
- Water
- Dropper or spray bottle
- Native wildflower seeds
- Toothpicks

Directions:

1. It is easier to control the moisture of the seed bombs by creating one at a time. Each seed bomb will need to be about the size of a golf ball, so at this point you can start by sizing out your clay.
2. Moisten clay: mix the clay with water until it is the consistency of soft-serve ice cream. For this step, we recommend flattening out a ball of clay in your hand and spraying or dropping water a little at a time onto the clay, then kneading.
3. Add the compost or soil to your clay ball in a 1:1 ratio clay to soil by volume. To do this, flatten out your ball of clay in your hands again, then little by little add your soil and knead in.
4. If needed, add some more water so that the mix is workable enough that the ball holds together, but is not sticky. If it is too sticky, mix in some sifted compost until you have the right consistency.
5. Poke 4-6 holes in the seed bomb with your toothpick, spaced out on the ball. Then insert *one* seed in each hole and gently roll the ball in your hands to cover up the seeds completely.

Note: *You don't want 8 germinating seeds in one seed ball. That will **stress out** the seedlings and none will thrive. Try to give enough space between the seeds and don't pack too many in.*

6. Use toothpicks to draw designs in balls of clay (optional).
7. Air dry until the batch is a uniformly light color.



8. Store in a cool, dry spot until ready to use in the fall or early spring. Seed bombs should fit perfectly in egg cartons for storing.
9. When ready to use, throw seed bombs in areas where you want native plants to grow and let nature do the rest!

FAQs About Native Plants

Q: Why are native plants important?

A: Native plants are a food source for many native insects and birds; native insects are also a food source for native birds. Native plants attract only insects and animals that are familiar with the plants that grow in their habitat—promoting the growth of native plants promotes a sustainable, balanced ecosystem within your own backyard.

Q: What organisms are attracted to native plants?

A: Native plants attract one of the most crucial insects to our survival right now—bees. Bees species can range from generalists (some bees that can pollinate a variety of flowers) or specialists (bees that pollinate only specific flowers, usually size restrictive).

Q: Why are pollinators important?

A: Pollinators like wild native bees are important because they pollinate most of our crops—fruits and vegetables for us to eat. Wild pollinators collect pollen rather than nectar, which helps in dispersal and is a more effective means of pollinating.

Q: What native plants should I plant to attract pollinators?

A: There are various sources of information to use. The resource following this FAQ includes information about adding plants for a full season of blooms as well as which types of bees may find your flowers useful.

Q: How does a seed bomb work?

A: The rain and moisture will help break the seed bomb apart where the seeds will (hopefully) germinate and grow on the existing ground. Native plant seeds often lay on top of the ground and germinate without being dug into the soil.