

Make a Seed Ball

Planting a seed is no guarantee that it will grow to maturity! Vegetable and flower seeds are packed with tons of nutrients for the plant to use when growing, which makes them an ideal snack for birds and small animals. These critters can easily sniff out seeds to stow or eat them, leaving gardens bare. Strong winds and rain can also carry seeds away.

Soil balls help protect seeds from being eaten or washed away. Compacting the seeds in a mixture of compost and clay ensures that the seeds will have enough soil nutrients available to sprout, while also providing an extra layer of protection.

When deciding which seeds you want to include, consider how you can help pollinators stay healthy! Seed balls are a fun and convenient way of increasing plant diversity and ensuring that native pollinators are well-fed.

Materials needed:

- ½ cup of seeds (flower, vegetable, or any non-invasive plant)
- 2 ½ cups of compost or potting soil
- 1 - 1 ½ cups of powdered clay
- Water
- Mixing bowl
- Tray or flat surface for drying

Step-by-step instructions:

1. In a bowl, mix seeds, compost, and powdered clay.
2. Slowly add water until mixture begins to clump together.
3. Roll mixture into small, firm balls.
4. Place seed balls on a flat surface in a warm, dry place.
5. Let dry for 24-48 hours.

Additional explorations:

- Use wildflower seeds in your seed balls to help provide food for pollinators! Knapweed, hareball, chamomile, and wild thyme are great options.

Discussion questions:

- How could you further protect your garden from unwanted pests and weather events?
- Why do you think it is important to include clay in the mixture?
- What would happen if you didn't include nutrient rich soil in your seed balls? Would your seeds ever sprout?

