



## Therapeutic Horticulture Activity Seed Bombs

Source: multiple internet sources

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**Overview:** Creating seed bombs to throw into roadside ditches or in bare areas. In theory, seeds within seed balls are protected in the structure until adequate rainfall removes the surrounding clay and a small pocket of nutrients from the compost component in the ball nourishes the seedlings as they emerge. They are noted to enhance seed to soil contact, reduce seed loss due to predation, and reduce seed redistribution by the wind. A second activity of packaging/wrapping the seed bombs to be given as gifts can be done during a follow-up session.

### **Precautions:**

1. Hands will get messy.
2. Work surface may get messy depending on the motor skill of participants.

Completion Time: 60 minutes; completed seed ball drying time 24-72 hours

Materials: (10 participants)

*\*the recipe calls for 1 part seed, 3 parts compost, 5 parts clay, see Tip #1 at end of activity sheet for a variation on this ratio\* Materials below are indicated based on ½ cup parts and should yield around 100 seed bombs, or 10 per participant, but can be adjusted to make less or more end product*

1. Seeds, best to use a diverse native seed mix (5 cups)
2. Compost (15 cups)
3. Clay, either “air dry clay mix” from craft store or clay soil, dry and pulverized (25 cups)
4. Water (~10 cups)
5. Bucket to hold water (1)
6. Bucket to deposit solid measuring devices and wood spoons as activity progresses (optional) (1)
7. 1 cup + measuring glass (1)
8. Spray bottles (optional) (1-10)
9. Container to hold seeds (1)
10. Container to hold compost (1)
11. Container to hold clay (1)
12. 1 cup and ½ cup measuring cups (1 each)
13. Container to mix ingredients (10)
14. Garden or latex gloves (optional) (10 pairs)
15. Wooden spoons or other stirring device (10)
16. Receptacle to place seed balls to dry once formed, such as on cardboard or on a baking sheet (# varies depending on size)
17. Soap and sink, or bucket with water source (1)
18. Hand towels or paper towels (5-10)
19. Table/work surface covering (optional) (# depending on work surfaces)

Pre-Session Prep:

1. Collect materials.
2. If using clay soil, collect and allow to dry as needed; crush dried clay into powder.
3. Create example of finished seed bombs.
4. Gather information pertinent to the seeds you will be using.
5. Cover the work surface if getting dirty is of concern.
6. Fill spray bottles, if using, and water bucket with water.

## Step-By-Step Process/Instructions:

1. Introduce the activity.
2. Give history of seed bombs, see attached.
3. Introduce the seeds/plants being used. Talk about what growing conditions are ideal regarding sunlight and time of year to deploy the bombs.
4. Pass out containers and wooden spoons to each participant and gloves if they wish to use them.
5. Allow each participant to scoop up  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of seeds,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups of compost, and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cups of clay into their container.
6. Instruct them to mix the components thoroughly using the wooden spoons.
7. Take the water bucket and measuring glass around to participants and have them add 1 cup of water to the mixture, stirring it with the spoon or kneading by hand.
8. The mixture should hold together easily; if it is crumbly add more water; if it is too liquid add more clay or compost.
9. Employ spray bottles is using or recirculate with the bucket of water and compost or clay to offer more as needed.
10. Place the receptacle or surface being used to hold the bombs while they dry in a central, accessible location; if mobility is of issue, have the participants place the balls off to the side of their work area and collect them into receptacle for drying afterward.
11. Allow seed bombs to dry for 24-72 hours before sowing or storing; drying is best done indoors but if doing it outside make sure it is in a shady location and above 32°F. The dried bombs store best in breathable material (cardboard, cotton bag, etc.); do not store in a plastic bag or an airtight container.
12. Facilitate hand washing at sink, or out of the water bucket (dirty water dumped and refilled as needed with each participant) with soap and towels.
13. Wrap up the group by discussing how and when the seed bombs will be stored and distributed (for example will they be given back right away or redistributed when the appropriate time of year for deployment has arrived).

### Tips:

1. Some recipes use the opposite ratio of compost and clay, calling for 5 parts compost and 3 parts clay; use whichever one is more readily available and cost effective for the 5 parts; or try both recipes and do an experiment of which one is most successful for your growing conditions.
2. Can use a mortar and pestle to pulverize dry clay soil.
3. Shape balls into different forms by hand or by using a silicone mold.

### History of Seed Bombs.Final

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