

Pollinator Day: Seed-bomb Activity

This activity will let the whole family get their hands dirty to help bees and other pollinators. Making seed-bombs is a fun way to create pollinator habitats and break up food deserts.

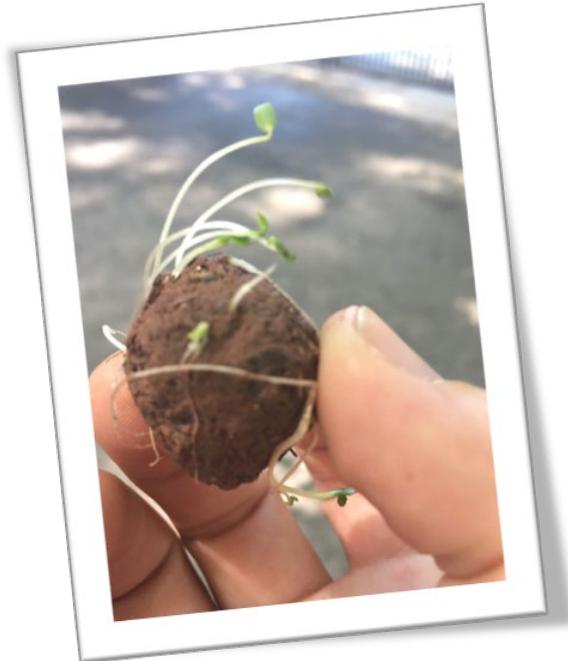
Age: all ages

Gather your Gear

- Dry pottery clay ([we get ours from here](#))
- Potting soil or compost
- Native wildflower seeds ([we get ours from here](#))
- Water
- Mixing bucket

Get Ready *Get your family thinking about the activity before you start.*

- Pollinators are important to our ecosystem and help provide food that many of us eat every day.
- Bees and other pollinators provide around 35% of the food we eat today—or about one in three bites of food.
- Not all bees are well suited to pollinate every flower. Today, there are 20,000 different species of bees that are grouped by their tongue size (small, medium, and long). The length of their tongue determines which type of flowers a bee can drink nectar from.
- Bees and other pollinators are losing safe habitat at an alarming rate. The major reasons are human development, intensive agriculture, and widespread pesticide use.
- An easy way to help all the different species of bees is to plant native, pollinator-friendly plants in your area.
- Seed-bombs are fun ways to spread seeds and plant flowers for pollinators to enjoy. The dirt allows the seed to germinate and get a head start, while the clay helps trap moisture in and protect the seeds from hungry birds.
- Eventually, the roots will find their way to the ground and the seed bomb will erode away, leaving flowers to grow there.



Make Your Own Seed-Bombs

- In the large mixing bucket, mix two parts pottery clay to every three parts soil/compost. Mix the clay and soil until you get an even distribution.
- Add water to the mixture (experiment with one part water). You should get a slightly damp mud ball. If it is caking to your hands, then the mixture is too wet, and you will need to dry it out. To dry the seed-bomb mixture out, let it sit in the sun for a few minutes until it reaches the right consistency, or add more of the clay/soil ratio. This is now your seed-bomb matrix!
- Once you have the mixture right, pinch off small pieces of the matrix and roll it into a ball with about the diameter of a dime.
- Once you have your ball the right size, push your finger down to pick up one to two seeds and push them into the middle of your seed matrix. You will not need a lot of seeds if they have high germination rates (>90%).
 - Note: it can be helpful to sprinkle some of your seeds onto a plate so everyone can easily access them.
- Reshape your seed-bomb into a ball shape again and then let it harden and dry in the sun.
- Throw the seed-bomb into unkempt grassy or bare dirt areas where there is plenty of access to sun and rain and where it doesn't look likely that it will be mowed over.
- Keep an eye out for growing flowers and enjoy your new pollinator friends!

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Recap *Have a conversation about what you learned and questions your family may have.*

- How are bees and pollinators important to our lives?
- Can you think of some of your favorite foods that might be helped by animal pollination?
- What are some ways that we can help pollinators?

Relate *Create connections to the idea through activities.*

- Try making extra seed-bombs and keeping them in your car to spread when your family takes a trip. Grassy sides of highways and the interstate make great places for flowers to grow.
- Share your new passion for pollinators with neighbors and friends! Make seed-bomb gift bags to give away with little notes sharing interesting pollinator facts that you have learned.

It takes a team.... join ours: Help us save species by joining the “Zoo Conservation Corps” and raise awareness about wild animals, their habitats and why conserving both are so important. If your family members are on social media, post pictures of your seed-bombs and use the hashtags #PollinatorDay and #OnlyZooATL so that we can see all your great work!

Want to know more....

- To learn more about what you can do to help pollinators, as well as what Zoo Atlanta is doing, visit our Project Pollinator page at <https://zooatlanta.org/project/project-pollinator/>