



## Earth Day Activity: DIY Pollinator Packets

**Objective:** You can help native pollinators by making some pollinator packets. These are small spheres made of clay, soil, and wildfire seeds, that you can toss into any bare spot in your garden. Follow this recipe and have some fun out in the garden this spring.

**Difficulty:** Easy (Ages 8-14)/Easy with help (Ages 2-8)

### Materials

- Meadow flower seeds or seeds you collect
- Peat-free soil containing compost
- Water
- Mixing bowl.
- Optional: Clay powder (found in art supply shops)

It's a bird! It's a bee! It's a pollinator!

We can help our environment by helping the birds and insects that help pollinate plants. These animals move pollen from one plant to another, helping farmers grow the food we eat, and helping plants grow that help other animals survive. They are a vital part of our ecosystem.

Oregon pollinators include bees, beetles, butterflies, moths, hummingbirds, wasps, and flies.

Since 2006, some pollinators have been in trouble. Bee populations have been suffering from a disorder that causes many to die. Scientists have been studying our native pollinators and how to keep their populations healthy.

### Procedure

This can be messy- do it outside on a spread newspaper. Be sure to help clean up afterwards.

- Mix together 1 cup of seeds and 5 cups of soil. You can also add 2-3 cups of clay powder (you could use clay soil instead if you have it)

- Slowly mix in water with your hands until everything sticks together.
- Roll the mixture into firm balls.
- Leave the balls to dry in a sunny spot.
- Look around your garden or yard. Where would you like to attract pollinators? Toss the seed balls into areas you think would benefit from visits by butterflies, moths, hummingbirds, and other pollinators.
- Water your seed balls lightly. Over time, the earth will naturally join the environment. Check every few days with your science journal, and track how long it takes from planting time until you start to see new growth.
- Once your pollinator plants have sprouted, you can observe them and see how many pollinators you see around them.

### **Some pollinator-friendly seeds you can include in your pollinator packets:**

**Lavenders:** This evergreen shrub is a favorite of many bees, including bumblebees, carpenter bees, digger bees, and leafcutting bees

**Blueblossom:** This plant hosts the eggs and caterpillars of Pale Swallowtail butterflies, as well as California tortoiseshell and Echo Blue butterflies.

**Russian sage:** This plant attracts hummingbirds, as well as honey bees, small carpenter bees, and leafcutting bees.

**Red-flowering currant:** This Pacific Northwest native is an important food source for early-season butterflies, and hummingbirds also love it.

**Zinnias:** Welcome many types of hummingbirds, as well as bees and butterflies to your yard with these bright flowers.

**Sunflower:** These tall, impressive flowers provide nectar for longhorn bees, sweat bees, leafcutting bees, and bumblebees.

**Milkweed:** These wildflowers are crucial to the survival of Monarch butterflies, who collect their nectar and pollen, lay eggs, and feed their caterpillars on the leaves. Hummingbirds also love this native plant.

**Mixed Wildflowers:** You can find packets of mixed wildflower seeds, such as the Pacific Northwest Wildflower mix, at your CO-OP or garden store.

When your pollinator packets start blooming, they'll be a great place to practice some botanical or insect photography. You can photograph your plants in bloom and the animals that visit them.

For another fun activity to welcome pollinators to your garden, check out our Insect Hotel DIY project!

Have fun, and stay curious!

Take a picture of you using your science journal, and share it with us, so we can see what you made! For more engineering projects and science activities, [subscribe to our newsletter](#)! Have an adult send it to [online@scienceworksmuseum.org](mailto:online@scienceworksmuseum.org) or share it using the hashtag #ScienceWorksOnline