

Activity: Nature Goal: Psychological/Emotional Populations: Mental Health

TH Activity Plan – Eco Seed Orbs

Text by Joanna Brown

Photo by Stock photo & Shutterstock.com



Materials

Air dry clay
Brown paper bags cut for placemats
Native wildflower seeds
Soil or compost
Mixing & shaping tools
(spoons, scoops, bowls)
Packaging
Instructions (optional)

Gloves, wipes

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants will make eco seed orbs that can be planted in home or facility gardens.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Practice following sequential steps; expand knowledge about pollinators & native plants

Physical: Breathe fresh air; strengthen hand dexterity; strengthen muscles by throwing eco orbs

Psychological/Emotional: Practice a new strategy for self-care; experience stress relief by repetitive motions shaping seed balls; practice meditative action by shaping balls; expend excess energy by throwing orbs

Sensory: Use olfactory sense smelling orb balls; connect with nature through sensory stimulation; use tactile sense shaping orbs

Social: Participate in a group session where connecting with nature occurs

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Set up the work area with all materials easily accessible to participants.
2. Facilitator begins session by sharing the purpose and benefits emphasizing role in supporting local pollinators. Briefly discuss the types of seeds being used and beneficial emotional components of activity.
3. Prep the clay: Hand out gloves to those who want them. Knead clay in hands or on a flat surface to make it pliable. A few drops of water can be added if the clay is too dry.
4. Introduce seeds and soil. Use a spoon or scoop to add a small amount of seeds and soil to their clay. Knead the seeds into the clay until evenly distributed, ensuring the seeds are fully encased to protect them from birds or insects. Do the same for the soil.
5. Roll the clay into a ball/orb, smoothing it with fingers.
6. Place the finished orbs on trays/containers for participants to take home. These should be left to air dry in a safe, dry place. *The drying process can take a day or two, depending on humidity and air flow.*
7. Invite participants to reflect on the process. Discuss how activities like these contribute to environmental conservation, stress relief, sensory experience, personal well-being & self-care strategies.
8. Provide instructions on when and where to plant the orbs, the practice of throwing the orbs as a release for energy & stress. Ideal placement would be where participants can later observe the growth and flowering of wildflowers.

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: Originally delivered as a TH activity for female survivors of human trafficking, the focus of the activity is on discovering a unique way to cope with strong emotions while exploring the benefits

of native plants within the local environment. It can serve as a mindfulness activity; the repetitive action of making several eco orbs can calm the mind and support the practice of being in the present moment.

Therapeutic goals can include: self-awareness and empowerment for wellbeing, exploring renewal and growth, developing coping skills to manage self-defeating thoughts and difficult moments. The plant-based nature of the activity integrates therapeutic goals where increasing time outdoors, sensory stimulation, recognition of sense/passage of time can occur, and where opportunity for socialization can be part of the session.

Eco seed orbs have been delivered with populations undergoing behavioral health treatment and addiction recovery. This includes individuals experiencing trauma, substance misuse, PTSD, homelessness, and recent incarceration.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Facilitators are responsible for knowing poisonous and toxic plants and plant parts.

Be allergy aware by ensuring that none of the participants are allergic to the types of seeds or clay being used. This includes not only the seeds themselves but any potential allergens in the wildflower mix. Use only non-toxic, environmentally friendly materials like natural air-dry clay and organic compost. This is particularly important as the seed bombs will eventually degrade in the environment. Mixing dry ingredients can create dust which may be irritating to breathe. Ensure the area is well-ventilated, and have masks available for those who might have sensitivities. If tools like scissors or knives are used for cutting bags or shaping materials, review safety protocols and supervise their use, especially if children are involved (consider safer alternatives like child-safe scissors).

Encourage participants to wash their hands both before and after the activity to prevent the spread of germs and to remove any residues from the materials used. Provide gloves for those who prefer to use them, especially if they have sensitive skin, want to avoid direct contact with the clay and seeds or are sensory defensive. Be mindful of small children who are part of the activity, as small seeds and small lumps of clay can be choking hazards. A basic first aid kit is recommended.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: Airdry clay can be purchased online, or from a local craft store. Provide enough clay for each participant to make 4 or 5 orbs. Typically, about 1.5 pounds of clay per person is sufficient. A good estimate and verbal direction for the size of orbs - a large kitchen spoon, or roughly the size of the palm of hand. Seeds, clay, and soil or compost can be prepared beforehand and placed in bowls at each table or in an accessible location for participants. Encourage a mix of different seeds for biodiversity. Incorporating soil or compost helps provide nutrients and improves the eco orbs' structure. This can be done in advance by setting up a bowl full of clay, a bowl of soil and small bowls of seeds at each table.

When eco seed orbs are dry at participants' homes and ready for the self-directed phase of throwing their eco orbs, it is recommended that they be thrown in an area where it can be watered or will receive adequate water and sunlight. Ensure that the seeds used are appropriate for the local environment to avoid introducing invasive species that could disrupt local ecosystems. Provide clear instructions on how and where to plant the seed bombs to ensure they are used responsibly and effectively.

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

- Besemer, T. (2021). [Homemade wildflower seed bombs to beautify forgotten landscapes](#). Rural Sprouts.com.
- Liz Inspires. (2020). [Repetition as inspiration, meditation and practice](#).
- West, B. (2023). [How to make a seed bomb](#). Ethique.com.

Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2024.

TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2024.

