



Phoenix 52  
Community Arts Group

## Seed Bomb Fact Sheet

Cultivation or reforestation via seed balls is not a new concept; I've read that some Native American tribes farmed this way. But the practice was reintroduced in the 1930's in Japan by natural farming pioneer, Masanobu Fukuoka, who used seed balls to grow grains in arid regions of his country. Fukuoka called this technique "do-nothing" farming because rigorous plowing of the soil was not necessary; all that was needed were the seed balls, some rain, and a little time.

Today, seed balls are used widely around the world to revive or cultivate vegetation in barren areas without having to till the land. And in big cities all around the UK, seed balls have become tools of an environmental movement called "guerilla gardening," in which eco-activists lob the balls onto unsightly and often trash-ridden abandoned lots in an effort to spruce up neglected neighborhoods, grow wholesome foods for the community, or both.

### What are seed balls made of?

Seed balls consist of just four ingredients: seeds, compost, clay, and water. Everything is mixed together, molded into little spheres, and left to dry in the sun.

Be sure to use wildflowers that are native to your area. If you're not sure, ask your local nursery.

### How do seed balls work?

Once the balls are dry, they can be tossed onto practically any pile of dirt, where they will wait unmolested (the clay protects the seeds from being eaten by birds, rodents, and other animals) until they have absorbed enough rainwater to germinate. The compost provides all the nutrients the seeds need to grow.

### Wildflower Seed Balls Recipe

Yields about 40 to 50 jawbreaker-sized balls.

- 1 part native wildflower seeds
- 3 parts dry organic compost
- 5 parts dry powdered red pottery clay, available at fine art shops
- 1 to 2 parts water
- Large bucket to mix everything in

Now for the dirty work. If picking mud out from under your fingernails is not your idea of fun, feel free to don a pair of rubber, latex, or nitrile gloves first. Mix seeds and compost thoroughly by hand. Add in clay and mix again. Slowly add water and continuing mixing by hand until well blended. You will know when you reach the right consistency when the mixture holds together in a ball without falling apart. Mold mixture into balls about the size of truffles. Allow to dry on flat surface in sun for a minimum of one full day, or until they are completely dry. Do not let balls sit moist for too long or they may begin to sprout!