



CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN

Making Seed Tapes

Purpose:

Stimulate a sense of curiosity about life and the germination process of a seed. Learn to use a tactile ruler, measuring cups, and spoons and to develop fine motor skills with limited visual input.

Description: Participants will use common household materials to make a system for planting seeds that is perfectly spaced.

Time Required: 45 minutes

Materials:

Suggested seeds: cucumber, carrot, radish, aster

15 large trays to contain materials

15 large zip-lock bags

15 permanent markers to write on bags,

or 45 blank address labels on which to write with any pen

4 cups of flour

15 empty paper cups (5 ounces)

15 plastic bowls

15 plastic spoons

15 paper cups (5 ounces)—filled with water

15 paintbrushes

Paper towels



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Instructions:

Set up: Have a tray at each participant's location. On the tray, place the bowl in the lower center, the measuring utensils and spoon on the right, and the flour and water on the left, each in its own 5-ounce cup.

1. Introduce the activity and each of the seeds. Pass a sample of each of the different seeds around and encourage each participant to touch the seeds.
2. Discuss the seeds size and why it's helpful to make seed tape. Small seeds, such as the ones being used, are hard to plant in a garden by hand. Large seeds are easier to manage, but need to be evenly spaced to avoid wasting seed. The seed tape makes the planting process much easier.
3. Orient participants to the location of materials.
4. Use measuring spoons and the container of flour to measure 2 tablespoons of flour into the bowl.
5. Carefully add about half of the water to the flour and stir. Add small amounts of water, stirring it in each time, until the mixture is similar to thin pancake batter.
6. Once each participant has made a "glue," pass out the strips of paper towels to each individual. Each participant gets three strips.
7. Check the planting recommendations for each of the seed types and instruct how far to space the seeds apart, focusing on just one type of seed at a time.
8. Use the tactile ruler and the paintbrush to place one dab of glue at each interval per instructions.
9. Use the same paintbrush to pick up a few seeds by delicately dabbing just the tip of the brush into the seed container.



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10. Hold the tip of the brush, loaded with a few seeds, next to each dab of glue. Using your other hand, gently scrape a few seeds off of the brush and into the glue. Repeat for each dab of glue and for each type of seed.
11. While the seed tapes dry, each participant should label three plastic bags with their name, the name of one type of seed, and the date.
12. When the bags are ready, fold each seed tape in half lengthwise, trapping the seeds between two layers of paper towels.
13. Place each tape into the proper bag. The bag should be sealed shut when the tape has dried completely.
14. Store the tapes in a shaded, cool area until they're ready to be planted in the garden in spring and/or fall.