

A top-down photograph showing several people's hands gathered around a clear plastic container filled with a dark, moist mixture. They appear to be in the process of making seedballs. The background is a grassy field.

HOW TO... MAKE WASTEPAPER SEEDBALLS

Bees and other pollinating insects spread pollen from flower to flower, fertilizing plants. Without them, plants wouldn't be able to produce flowers or fruits and we wouldn't have peas, tomatoes and strawberries! But these amazing little creatures are disappearing in the UK.

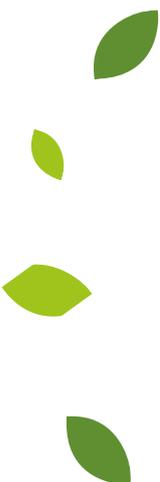
One reason for this is the loss of wildflower meadows. You can feed bees and other pollinators on your patch by planting wildflower seedballs. It's easy to do and anyone can get involved.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Wastepaper – old newspapers, tissue paper and recycled paper work well. Don't use shiny paper (like the pizza menus you get through your door).
- Native wildflower seeds: Cornflower, Ox-eye Daisy and Poppies are a good mix. Other varieties you could use include Lavender, Betony, Common Vetch, Foxglove, Parsley, Red Clover or Snapdragons.
- A few pinches of chilli powder (to discourage slugs) and cinnamon (to stop harmful microbes).
- Water.
- A bowl for mixing the seedballs, and a cloth and sieve to drain them.

HOW TO MAKE THE SEEDBALLS

- Tear up the paper into small pieces and put in a bowl. Add enough water to almost cover it and mix well.
- Leave the mixture overnight so it soaks up all the water and makes a mush.
- Take your mush and mash it up again with a spoon. You can speed things up by using a food blender, but make sure you get a grown-up to help.
- Now put a cloth in a sieve and put a good handful of the mush in it. Mix in the seeds, smaller ones work best. Knead the seeds into the mush and at the same time squeeze the water out. You want your seedball mix to be like playdough, damp rather than soggy.





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- Take small clumps of the seedball mix and roll into 10p-sized balls (you could also press it into cookie cutters or silicon ice cube trays to make different shapes).
- Put the seedballs in trays on a warm windowsill or in a cupboard for 2 – 3 days to dry. If you're using cookie cutters or ice cube trays, remove the seedballs after 24 hours and then let them dry for 2 – 3 days.
- Your seedballs are ready when they are no longer cool and damp to the touch.



WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

- If the seedball mix gets too crumbly, just add water. If the seedballs are too wet, the seeds will start to germinate overnight, so squeeze out excess water, or add more tiny bits of paper or tissue to get the right consistency.
- Don't eat the mix. Some seeds are poisonous!

WANT TO DO MORE?

Make different seed mixes for different spots – try herbs, grasses, or seedballs with just one big seed in like an acorn or sycamore tree seed. Great for presents!

DOS AND DON'TS OF SEEDBALLS

Do...

- Throw onto a patch of soil or plant in a pot.
- Water during dry periods.
- Share your patch on social media using #backyardnature.

Don't...

- Throw into overgrown areas.
- Throw in the countryside.

