

Stems from Them was created by Lupe (@transplanter_) to connect QTBIPOC to plants as acts of resistance and joy. @stemsfromthem offers free and accessible plants to QTBIPOC in order to disrupt harmful mainstream plant practices rooted in capitalism and white supremacy. @stemsfromthem envisions growing a QTBIPOC plant loving community where connections to plants are freely available for QTBIPOC to access.

Clay Seed Balls



Clay seed balls were first created as a way of preserving seeds for the upcoming season's crops. Seeds were mixed with humus or compost, rolled into clay, and formed into balls. This ancient process was re-invented and advanced by Masanobu Fukuoka, a Japanese farmer and philosopher born early in the beginning of the 20th century. Today these seed balls receive note in the news as a tool used by "guerrilla gardeners" trying to reclaim abandoned inner-city areas as green spaces.

Materials included:

- Soil
- Clay
- Native seeds
 - California poppy, desert marigold, desert senna, desert lupine, blue bells, penstemon, cosmos, coreopsis, purple coneflower, scarlet sage, sweet alyssum, four o'clock, creosote, triangle bursage, brittlebush, desert globe mallow, needle gramma

Additional materials needed:

- Water
- Bowl
- Wax paper/baking sheet or something similar to place and dry seed balls

Making your seed balls:

- First, gather your supplies.
 - clay, soil, mixing bowl, water, seeds, wax paper or sheet to dry seed balls
- Place clay into mixing bowl and add a little bit of water into the clay enough to soften but not make it runny.
- Slowly add soil into the clay and knead until it's the texture of cookie dough.
- Mix in the seeds last to ensure that each seed ball had an even concentration of seeds.

- Take small bits of the seed ball mixture and roll into ball about one inch in diameter. The balls should hold together easily. If they're crumbly, add more water.
- Leave your seed balls somewhere to dry, which could take between one and three days.
- Lastly, toss or place your new treasures directly onto bare soil. As long as they are watered (either manually or by rain), the clay will break down and the seeds will grow.

USING YOUR SEED BALLS

Seed balls are designed to survive adverse conditions. However, following a few simple tips will increase their chances of thriving where they land:

Cultivate when you can

Seed balls are a particularly good way to plant native species. While it's true for all seed balls, it's especially so for native plant balls: if you are able, weeding and loosening the soil where you intend to plant will greatly increase your chances of success. Plant the seed balls by nestling them halfway into the cultivated soil, leaving about six inches between each ball to allow the new plants space to grow. Water the site once the plants have germinated and in their first couple of seasons.

Aim for bare soil

Few plants have the ability to grow on asphalt or compete with a jungle of established weeds. If you are attempting to reclaim an overgrown spot and can't weed it ahead of time, throw your seed balls in early spring before the existing plants have woken up.

Throw in the right season

Seed balls need water and moderate temperatures to succeed. Throwing them in the middle of a drought will decrease their chances of surviving. Monsoon season and spring tend to be the best times to distribute seed balls.

Quantity over quality

In the wild, plants produce thousands of seeds with the hope of a few making it into adulthood, a lesson guerilla gardeners are wise to heed. Don't expect all of your seed balls to grow into mature plants. The more you distribute, the better your chances are of them sprouting into a garden.

Seed balls as gifts

Seed balls have become a popular gift. Be sure the seed balls are fully dry before packaging them.