Make flower seed balls

Plant wildflowers for next spring with these little parcels.



IN DECLINE
Since the 1930s, the UK has lost 97% of its wildflower meadows.

WARNING!
Ask for an adult's help to use a blender.

What you need

- Six large sheets of recycled newspaper
- Wildflower seeds (choose native, non-invasive flowers such as oxeye daisy, poppy or meadow buttercup)
- Large bowl to soak the paper
- Blender
- Colander
- Food colouring (optional)
- Wire cooling rack (optional, to dry the seed balls)

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It might seem too early to be thinking about sprinkling seeds for spring but autumn is actually the perfect time to get gardening. The weather conditions are great for planting wildflowers because more rain and less extreme temperatures are better conditions for them to start growing. Your flowers will also have a better chance of survival at this time of year as they have less competition from weeds, many of which die off as the days get cooler. Wildflowers are important: not only do they produce beautiful flowers, they also attract pollinators such as bees and butterflies to your garden or any outside area.

Follow these instructions to make seed balls – small clusters packed with wildflower seeds. They make great presents too.



Instructions

1. Tear the newspaper into small pieces, 3cm or smaller.
2. Place the ripped paper pieces in a bowl and cover them with water. Allow the paper to soak for at least 15 minutes.
3. With an adult's help, place the soaked paper into the blender until it's about one-third full, then fill it up the rest of the way with water. Blend well until it is a mushy pulp and there aren't any visible pieces. You may need to do a few batches.
4. Pour the pulp into a colander and press it until it is still wet (but not drippy) and you can shape it. Repeat with the rest of the paper.
5. If you like, you can add colour. Divide the pulp into as many bowls as the colours you have chosen. Add a drop of food colouring into the pulp and knead it in.
6. Take a small handful of the paper mixture and knead in two or three large seeds, or five to 10 small seeds. Roll it into a ball.
7. Place the seed balls on a wire rack or a few sheets of newspaper for two to four days to dry out. Then, store them in a cool, dark place until you are ready to plant them or give them to friends or family.
8. Plant the seed balls by poking them halfway into moist soil or tossing them into hard-to-reach spots in your garden. (If you plan on tossing them, soak them in some water first.) If all goes well you can expect to see plants sprouting as the weather warms in the spring.

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