

RECYCLING RECESS

MAKE SOMETHING; MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

HOMEMADE SEED PAPER

This recycled craft holds a secret – native seed flower power! Give used paper life; plant it in a garden or a pot of soil and watch it grow! Find a list of native plants and flowers at the United States Botanic Gardens [website](https://usb.gov/national-garden-native-plant-recommendations) (<https://usb.gov/national-garden-native-plant-recommendations>).

Work with an adult to safely complete this craft, as it requires using a blender.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Tear paper to be recycled into 2-inch pieces.
2. Loosely place paper pieces in to a blender.
3. Cover the paper with warm water and let it soak for 15 minutes. Place the lid on the blender and blend until a pulp forms.
4. Stir in seeds—you can add as many or as few as you like. Be sure to use something local or native to your region!
5. If you are not using colored paper, mix in food coloring (optional).
6. Take your blender and a screen outside (if you're not there already!) and place the screen on a table or the ground. Use a spoon or spatula to remove the pulp from the blender and spread it onto the screen.
7. Cover the pulp with a piece of parchment paper. Use a rolling pin, glass jar, or your hands to push the water out through the bottom of the screen or sieve.
Tip: If indoors, use a baking tray under the screen to collect extra water.
8. Push as much water out as you can and leave the even layer of pulp in a warm, dry spot overnight.
9. By the morning, your seed paper will be ready! Gently peel it off the screen.
Tip: If your paper is still moist you can use a hairdryer on a low setting to help finish the drying process.

SUPPLIES:

- * 6-8 pieces of paper
- * Blender
- * Warm water
- * Native flower seeds
- * Long handle spoon or spatula
- * Window screen or flat sieve-like item
- * Rolling pin or jar
- * Parchment paper
- * Food coloring (optional)

THAT'S IT! YOUR PAPER IS FINISHED. MAKE SOMETHING WONDERFUL!



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RECYCLING RECESS

WILDLIFE CONNECTIONS

This craft is the ultimate Earth-friendly activity; you are recycling paper that's no longer needed, and creating something that will help your local wildlife. Native plants and flowers benefit all animals, but especially pollinators.

What are pollinators? Birds, butterflies, flies, moths, and other animals that help transport pollen from one flower to another. Almost all fruits, grains, and vegetables rely on pollination for survival. Without it, most people and non-human animals would not have enough food. By helping pollinators, we're helping ourselves and the wildlife in our region!

When you're done using your seed paper, you can plant it in your backyard, community garden, or windowsill garden box instead of recycling it. The paper will break down, and seeds will grow into pollinator-friendly flowers and plants!

RECYCLING RECESS CHALLENGES

This activity recommends using native seeds, which come from plants and flowers that are local to where you live. Why do you think it's important to plant native seeds? How do native plants benefit local wildlife? How might wildlife be affected by plants that are not native to your area?

Pick a bird that you love seeing in your neighborhood and research what it eats, what it needs to make a nest, and where it migrates to in the winter (if it migrates at all!). What can you plant or put in your yard or window that will encourage this bird to visit you more often?

Journaling is a great way to observe and record the natural world around you! If you have leftover seeds from the packet that you used to make your paper, plant them too! Make predictions about how long the seedlings will take to emerge. Measure your plants daily and draw the changes. If your plants are outside, record animals that you see on or near them.

Learn more about Smithsonian's National Zoo at our [website](http://nationalzoo.si.edu) (nationalzoo.si.edu)!



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