

Seed Library

THIRD GRADE

Saving seeds dates back to the beginning of civilization and is one of the earliest agricultural practices. In some cultures, seeds are so treasured that they have been passed down from generation to generation for hundreds of years. Saving seeds from the school garden has many benefits, like saving money (saving seeds is free!) and building a sense of community by starting your own school tradition of passing down seeds from year to year.

SUBJECT

SCIENCE/SOCIAL
SCIENCE

TIME

30 MIN
+
15 MIN FOLLOW-UP
ONE WEEK LATER

MATERIALS

Read aloud book from the Garden Library (optional)

Newspaper and nursery trays for drying seeds, about 5

Small envelopes, at least 1 per student

Colored pencils, crayons, or markers, assortment to share

Small paper bags, 3-5

Scissors, 1 per student

Garden clippers, 1 per adult

Garden plants with full-sized seeds

DIRECTIONS

- Prior to the activity, visit the garden and look for plants that have produced full-size seeds (beans, peas, corn, sunflowers, lettuce, tomato, marigolds/ornamental flowers, etc.). Look for plants that are dried up, have “fuzz” growing from the stems, or have produced pods (see examples on the following page). Allow the seeds to dry on the plants before collecting. Identify the plants you want students to collect seeds from. Plan to set up stations for students to extract seeds.
- Introduce the activity by asking students what they know about libraries. Do they visit the school library? The community library? What is the purpose of a library? What are the benefits of libraries? How do they think a seed library would work?
- Lead a discussion about saving seeds or read a book from the Garden Library that explains that new plants come from the seeds of living plants. If discussing, ask where do new plants come from? (seeds) Where do the seeds come from? (the fruits and flowers of existing plants). Explain that students will be collecting seeds from the garden to start a seed library for the school.
- Direct students to the plants they will gather seeds from. They can use scissors to remove pea pods, lettuce branches, and tomatoes. Stronger clippers may be needed to remove ears of corn and sunflower heads.
- Designate one station, or area, per seed type to avoid mixing. Remove the seeds from bean and seed pods (use scissors if necessary), remove sunflower seeds and other flower seeds by hand, break open tomatoes to extract seeds (this can get messy!), and shake lettuce branches into paper bags to release the seeds. Keep all the seed types separate, so they don't get mixed up. Place the seeds on newspaper-lined nursery trays.
- Have students label their seed envelopes and include the plant name, date, and a picture of it. List the good qualities of the crop with details like flavor, size, harvest yield, etc. Include planting information (if known) or add this as an extension to research in the classroom.
- Store seed trays indoors in a dry space for about a week. Then pour the seeds into the envelopes. Send students home with their seed envelopes to give as gifts or plant at home. Collect 1 bag of seeds of each type and add it to the school's seed library.

SOURCE

- BCK Programs



Examples of Plants and Seeds

