

Educational Activities

Seeds



Introduction

The following are four examples of activities, divided into age groups, all related to seeding and seed management. Use your creativity to adapt them to your environmental, social, and cultural reality!

▶ Activity 1

Let's plant it!



In brief

Through an approach based on actively involving and stimulating the imagination of children, the names and functions of different traditional objects and characters in the garden are identified. Using the items-characters they meet, the children then engage in the activity of sowing certain local products with the help and supervision of the teachers.

Participants

Children aged 5/6.

Objectives

- Use a playful approach to encourage observation, exploration and direct knowledge of the garden environment, in particular the process concerning the sowing and growing of plants.
- Offer the pupils a space in which they can be proactive and experience personal responsibility and decision-making autonomy.
- Stimulate the children to collaborate with each other, to work in groups, to respect others and their surrounding environments.
- Develop a positive approach to the school garden by conveying botanical knowledge and offering hands-on experience in collecting plant specimens and classifying them.
- Develop a positive attitude towards the school garden by passing on knowledge about horticulture and the concrete experience of sowing.

Coordinators

Teachers, parents, grandparents.

Materials

Soil, shovel, watering can, rake, seeds, cardboard, marker.

Activity description

Part 1: preparing characters and soil for cultivation

The teachers prepare the characters that populate the garden, putting some cards depicting eyes and a mouth on the various tools to animate them. Each tool is decorated to represent the different members of the imaginary family: mummy hoe, daddy watering can, grandma shovel, grandpa rake. A small plot of land within the garden is located and prepared for sowing.



Part 2: introducing the characters populating the garden

The children are divided into small groups of 6-7 participants each, if possible with an equal number of boys and girls in the groups. The teachers try to create an imaginary environment, presenting the garden as an imaginary area populated by strange characters. The various members of the animated tool family are introduced one by one: each tool introduces itself to the children, telling them some funny anecdotes about themselves and describing how important their work is in the garden.

Part 3: how do we sow?

In this part, the children are given an explanation on how to prepare the soil and how to sow.

Part 4: let's try sowing

Each child is given some seeds of a local product.

After sowing, the children take it in turns to water their seeds.

Part 5: final considerations

The activity ends with a short period of reflection, during which the children go over what they have done and what they have learned, leaving them free to talk and express their thoughts, while respecting some basic rules of communication (respecting what others have to say, speaking by show of hands). The final message to be conveyed is that each child is responsible for the seedlings they plant; it is their responsibility to water them carefully in order to allow them to grow well.

Further information

For further information on the activity, contact Valentina Quaranta - Tanzania (valentina.quaranta@gmail.com).

▶ Activity 2

Seed management

In brief

The theme of seeds is explored: what is a seed, what are the different kinds of seeds in nature, what are the characteristics of seeds produced in reproduction centers, which are the methods of seed protection and preservation (selection and preservation, seed bank and seed sharing).

Participants

Children aged between 8 and 16; the activity is also suitable for training sessions with garden producers and communities

Objectives

- Stimulate learning through the direct knowledge of the garden environment, reflecting particu-

larly on the theme of seeds and teaching the different existing types of seeds, their classification and reproduction.

- Increase awareness of the concept of biodiversity of seeds and the importance of their role in nature.
- Facilitate the learning of techniques and aspects to be taken into account in the selection of seeds, in their preservation and conservation.
- Develop a positive attitude towards the school garden and, in general, to the surrounding environment, by passing on knowledge about horticulture.

Coordinators

Science teachers.

Materials

Notebooks and pens, board, slips of paper, glue and adhesive tape, ash, containers, seeds.

Activity description

Part 1: theory introduction and debate

The facilitator (teacher or other expert invited to the activity) initiates a debate with the children on the meaning of “seed”, asking them to indicate what types of seeds they know. The discussion goes on to talk about the different quality characteristics and function of the seeds, which factors need to be considered when selecting seeds, and the different methods of protection.



Part 2: recognizing

A small game is organized, a kind of quiz relay. On a plate or table, you have some piles of seeds of different species and qualities, without indicating which. The children are divided into a number of teams in single file. The teacher indicates one small pile at a time, and at the start signal the first in line runs to the point established. The order of arrival at the finish line also defines the order in which the representatives of the teams give the answer, identifying the seed. The team that correctly identifies the greatest number of seeds wins.

Part 3: a practical demonstration on the different methods of seed conservation.

Each child takes a container, fills it halfway with ash, adds the seeds (any quality will do) and covers them again with ash. The children are explained the benefit of pest protection that ash provides and the importance of keeping the seeds in this manner, in a cool and dry place.

Further information

For further information on the activity, contact John Kariuki Mwangi – Kenya (j.kariuki@slowfood.it).

Come closer

In brief

Through an approach based on stimulating the imagination of children and actively involving them, they learn to understand the practice of intercropping.

Participants

Children from 5 years of age (minimum 15 participants).

Objectives

Memorize the intercropping of some plants.

Coordinators

Teacher, in a large room indoors or outdoors on the grass.

Materials

- Sheets of paper and markers
- Some leaves/flowers or plant flowers if they are easy to identify
- String or adhesive tape

Preparation

Draw:

- the wind on 2 slips of paper;
- ants on 2 slips of paper;
- the rain on 2 slips of paper;
- a vegetable or fruit or flower on slips of paper (the same number as there are children left) or collect some specimens (leaves, flowers...) that they can recognize easily.

Activity description

Part 1: disguising

Use some string or adhesive tape to stick the slip of paper or the specimen on the participant to identify him/her.

Part 2: introducing

The teacher explains the rules of the game: the animals and the atmospheric agents faithfully interpret their identity while those receiving the slip of paper or the vegetable sample have to act the part of the seed corresponding to their vegetable (e.g. the one who receives the basil leaf will play the part of the basil seed). There can be physical contact but very delicately, rolling the classmates but without lifting or tugging at them.

The teacher explains the principles and importance of intercropping activities.

Part 3: interpreting

The teacher puts the participants playing the part of seeds simulating the sowing activity into several rows, according to intercropping.

Each seed takes up a curled up position on the ground.

The participants playing the parts of atmospheric agents and ants, individually or in couples, roll the seed-children with their hands, moving them away.

The seed-children, while rolling, try to get closer to the other seeds that enable intercropping, but being careful not to get near the seeds that would hinder intercropping.

At the stop signal, the teacher checks the intercrops.

Part 4: stimulating verbalization

The teacher asks the children to sum up the intercropping activities experimented and the obstacles encountered.

▶ Activity 4

Balls of clay and seeds

In brief

Some balls of clay and seeds useful for reforestation are prepared that are to repopulate abandoned areas or areas with poor vegetation. Therefore, the seeds will be those of particularly resistant trees or shrubs.

Participants

Children aged between 8 and 15.

Objectives

- Use a playful approach to stimulate observation, exploration and direct knowledge of the natural environment, especially the process concerning the sowing and growing of plants.
- Offer the participants a space in which to be proactive, experience personal responsibility and autonomy.
- Encourage children to develop collaboration among peers, teamwork, respect towards others and towards the surrounding environment.
- Develop a positive attitude towards the school garden by passing on knowledge related to the hands-on experience of sowing.

Coordinators

Science and geography teachers.

Materials

Tree or bush seeds, clay.

Activity description

Part 1: introducing theory and preparing materials

The teachers describe the qualities of the seeds selected (seasonality, adaptation, tradition, non-hybrid seeds...). They also explain the importance of intercropping different crops.

Part 2: preparing clay balls

The students put the seeds selected inside the clay mixture and form some balls. Clay plays a vital role because it is resistant over time (even for years in sparsely wet areas), gradually dissolving as sufficient water is absorbed to germinate the seeds.



Part 3: throwing and monitoring

The children choose the points from which to throw the balls, in different directions in the area identified. If they are thrown on an area easy to reach, or where some varieties that grow quickly are sown, the teacher and children periodically go and monitor the progress the seeds are making. A diary/poster can be made to monitor progress according to the conditions observed (which types of seeds develop sooner, if this depends on the conditions of the soil into which they have been thrown).

Further information

For further information on the activity, contact Sara El Sayed – Egypt (sara@nawayaegypt.org).

Help us find more photos!
