

Bringing Nature Home: Acadiana Native Seed Balls

Background information

This enrichment activity was sponsored by the Broadmoor Elementary PTO and designed by the Acadiana Native Plant Project (ANPP), a local non-profit whose mission is “To promote the use of native plants in our landscape” and to make sure there are plenty of native plants available for “Connecting habitats, one garden at a time” (find out more at greauxnative.org). Ms. Catherine Ishee, Broadmoor Elementary Science Lab Teacher, met with members of ANPP and enthusiastically agreed to conduct this activity with your children during one of their science classes.

What is a native plant?

This enrichment activity focuses on native plants. Native plants are those that were already growing in Acadiana before settlement by Europeans. Non-native (or exotic) plants were introduced here by human activity.

Why are native plants important?

Gardens in urban or cultivated areas that contain native plants create habitat for birds, pollinators and other wildlife by supplying shelter and food sources. By planting with native plants, a homeowner is creating the foundation for a healthy ecosystem. Native plants attract insects which in turn supply food for birds. Citizens can play a part in saving native habitats in south Louisiana by returning native plants – along with the many animal species that depend on them – to their own cultivated landscapes.

What is a seed ball and what do I do with it?

Seed balls are a fun way to help disperse native plants into a cultivated landscape. They consist of clay, a potting soil mix, and native seeds. These three “ingredients” are mixed together and left to dry. Once they are dry they can be dispersed immediately or stored. The seed balls your child

made can be placed in a home garden or flower bed or in the Broadmoor garden. All you have to do is drop it and wait!

Find out more!

The source of the seeds used for this activity were produced locally at the UL Ecology Center. The five seed balls your child made contain seeds of the native plants pictured below. For more information on these plants and other native plants please visit The UL Ecology Center <https://ecology.louisiana.edu/purenative/grasses-flowering-plants>, the USGS Guide to the Plants of Louisiana <https://warcapps.usgs.gov/PlantID>, or Acadiana Native Plant Project greauxnative.org.



Rudbeckia texana
Texas Coneflower



Silphium gracile
Rosinweed



Liatris pycnostachya
Prairie Blazing Star



Helianthus mollis
Ashy Sunflower



Monarda fistulosa
Beebalm

The activity doesn't have to stop here! Once you disperse your seed balls let ANPP know where they are and how they are doing. You can send your seed balls' locations and any pictures once the seeds have sprouted to mail@greauxnative.org and ANPP can post them on their Facebook page. Keep watching the plants with your family and note any insects or birds that visit them. And most importantly enjoy your plants!