

DIG ART!

CULTIVATING CREATIVITY
IN THE GARDEN



Mosaic Making: Seed Mosaic Planter

Overview Students will beautify terracotta flowerpots with mosaic patterns using a variety of seeds.

Objectives Students will:

- identify different seeds and beans
- design and create a mosaic using seeds as their tesserae (tess-a-ray), or mosaic material

Time 2 hours

Materials

- terracotta pots
- water sealant spray (even though these pots are meant for indoor use, the water sealant protects the glue from any moisture that may soak through the porous clay when the plant is watered)
- seeds and beans of all kinds (red lentils, green lentils, chickpeas, black beans, navy beans, mung beans, pinto beans, popping corn, sunflower seeds, etc.)
- ceramic mosaic glue
- popsicle sticks
- bowls



Instructions

1. Spray all of the terracotta pots with the water sealant spray prior to beginning the activity. Follow the instructions on the container for drying times and safety precautions.
2. Introduce your students to the art of seed mosaics as you show them photos from books and online galleries (see Resources). Crafting seed mosaics is a traditional Mexican art form that is made during harvest festivals and ceremonies.
3. As you prepare for this activity, encourage students to procure their own collection of seeds and beans from the garden and other outdoor areas. Supplement their collection with lentils and beans that can be purchased in bulk at your local store or farm.

4. Distribute a pot to each student and divide the students into small work groups at different tables. Ask the students to help you divide the seeds and beans up by color into bowls and then distribute the bowls to each group.
5. Encourage students to sketch out design ideas on paper before beginning their mosaic project. Once they begin, show them how to put a little bit of glue at a time on their pots, using a popsicle stick. They can then either use the sticks to individually place the beans and seeds one at a time, for more refined designs, or for a quicker approach, they can pour a handful of seeds over the glued area.
6. When the mosaics are finished put the pots somewhere out of the way to dry over night.



Taking it Further

Once dry, students can choose their favorite seeds or flowers to plant in their newly decorated flowerpot. These decorated pots make a great gift for Mother's Day or other celebrations. Remind them that these pots should be for indoor-use only and to be gentle in handling them, because the mosaics are delicate and some of the seeds and beans may fall off if handled roughly.

Resources

Books

Encyclopedia Of Mosaic Techniques: A Step-by-step Visual Directory, With An Inspirational Gallery Of Finished Works by Emma Biggs