



25min Guerrilla Gardening Grade 7 Facilitator Notes

Objective: To inspire interest in gardening through a fun and age targeted activity while promoting reclamation of urban green space.



Recipe Category: Plants & Gardening

✓ **Level of Difficulty:** Grades 7-8



Cooking Time: 25mins



Recipe Ingredients:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Part Compost | <input type="checkbox"/> Water to bind seed balls | <input type="checkbox"/> Hand washing station |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Part Wildflower Seed | <input type="checkbox"/> Drying trays | <input type="checkbox"/> Soap/Sanitizer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Parts Clay | <input type="checkbox"/> Bins for ingredients | <input type="checkbox"/> Ziploc bags |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixing Bowls | |



Curriculum Links:

Grade	Subject Area	Ontario Curriculum Links
7	Science & Technology	<p><i>Understanding Life Systems</i> Interactions in the Environment, Understanding Basic Concepts Students will demonstrate an understanding of interactions between biotic and abiotic elements in the environment. (O)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.1 demonstrate an understanding of an ecosystem as a system of interactions between living organisms and their environment. (S) • 3.5 describe how matter is cycled within the environment and explain how it promotes sustainability. (S) • 3.8 describe ways in which human activities and technologies alter balances and interactions in the environment. (S)
		<p><i>Understanding Structures and Mechanisms</i> Form and Function Students will analyze personal, social, economic and environmental factors that need to be considered in designing and building structures and devices. (O)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.1 Evaluate the importance for individuals, society, the economy, and the environment of factors that should be considered in designing and building structures and devices to meet specific needs. (S)
8	Science & Technology	<p><i>Understanding Structures and Mechanisms</i> Systems in Action Students will demonstrate an understanding of different types of systems and the factors that contribute to their safe and efficient operation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.2 identify the purpose, inputs and outputs of various systems (e.g., gardens) • 3.9 identify the social factors that influence the evolution of a system.

Introduction: (3 mins)

- Introductions (*who you are and what you're all about*)
- Give a brief introduction to the concept of *Guerrilla Gardening*. For example:
 - Guerrilla gardening is a technique used to make cities greener by gardening in public spaces. It is especially popular in under-utilized public spaces such as empty lots or areas in need of beautification like ignored sidewalk planters.
- Overview of the workshop/ what to expect from the next 20 or so minutes.
 - *Why Guerrilla Garden?*
 - History of Guerrilla Gardening
 - Seed Balls
 - Native Plants and Invasive Species

Guerrilla Gardening – What's that? (2 mins)

For starters, do we mean by the word *Guerrilla*?

- Guerrillas are fighters who are members of the public, not organized soldiers. Guerrilla Warfare is often associated with revolutionaries or freedom fighters. Guerrillas work within small groups without a front line and are flexible, unconventional and often ruthless in their approach
- Guerrilla tactics are based on ambush and sabotage, and their ultimate objective is usually to destabilize an authority through long, low-intensity confrontation. Famous Guerrillas include Che Guevara and Fidel Castro of Cuba.

Therefore, what do you think *Guerrilla Gardening* might mean then?

- Guerrilla Gardening is regular people coming together to garden public spaces, with or without permission. It can be political, like guerrilla fighting, an alternative way to green the city, or just something to do for fun.
- Guerrilla Gardening can also be thought of as graffiti with plants and can encompass many techniques. Like graffiti, there can be beautiful and well-planned guerrilla community gardens, or a few plants stuffed into a patch by the sidewalk, the guerrilla equivalent of tagging. A great thing about guerrilla gardening though, is that if it's done with a little care, many people from all walks of life can appreciate its ability to beautify the city.

Why Guerrilla Garden: (5 mins)

Ask for possible reasons to get involved in Guerrilla Gardening.

- **It's fun:** it's a way to get involved with environmental issues and your community that isn't serious, boring, or depressing
- Agriculture is a **fundamental human skill**, knowing how to grow food will always be useful
- **Radical** way to transform how people see the city and how it interacts with nature
- It's a great **creative** outlet, and project to work out outside school/work
- **Political**, a way to engage in your city and learn why things are the way they are and how they can be changed
- Meet **diverse** groups of people who are interested in green cities
- **Beautifying** the city
- Connecting the city with **nature** and making it a home to bugs, birds and animals and improving the soil, water, air, all that (*ask about some ways more greenery in the city can help the environment*)
- Use plants that would **otherwise be rejected** in space that would otherwise be ignored
- Can be used to **feed people**, organics for cheap!

What Does Guerrilla Gardening Involve?

▪ Techniques

Night plants (planting parties that swarm an area under cover of night)

Hanging planters (using plastic bags filled with soil and tied to fences or lampposts as mobile planters)

Sidewalk planters (plant something next to those trees growing on the sidewalk)

Creative containers (plant in anything, bathtubs, old shoes, containers, pipes)

Seed bombs (the focus of our workshop!)

▪ Problems

*Illegal (technically): You might get in trouble

*Illegitimate: you might get thrown out of your space after lots of work

*Need for care (especially water): gardens will be best appreciated and most effective if well tended

*Who pays? For materials, tools, seeds, etc

- Guerrilla Gardening in Toronto (see Serving Suggestions for links)

Kensington Car (car in Kensington Market turned into community planter)



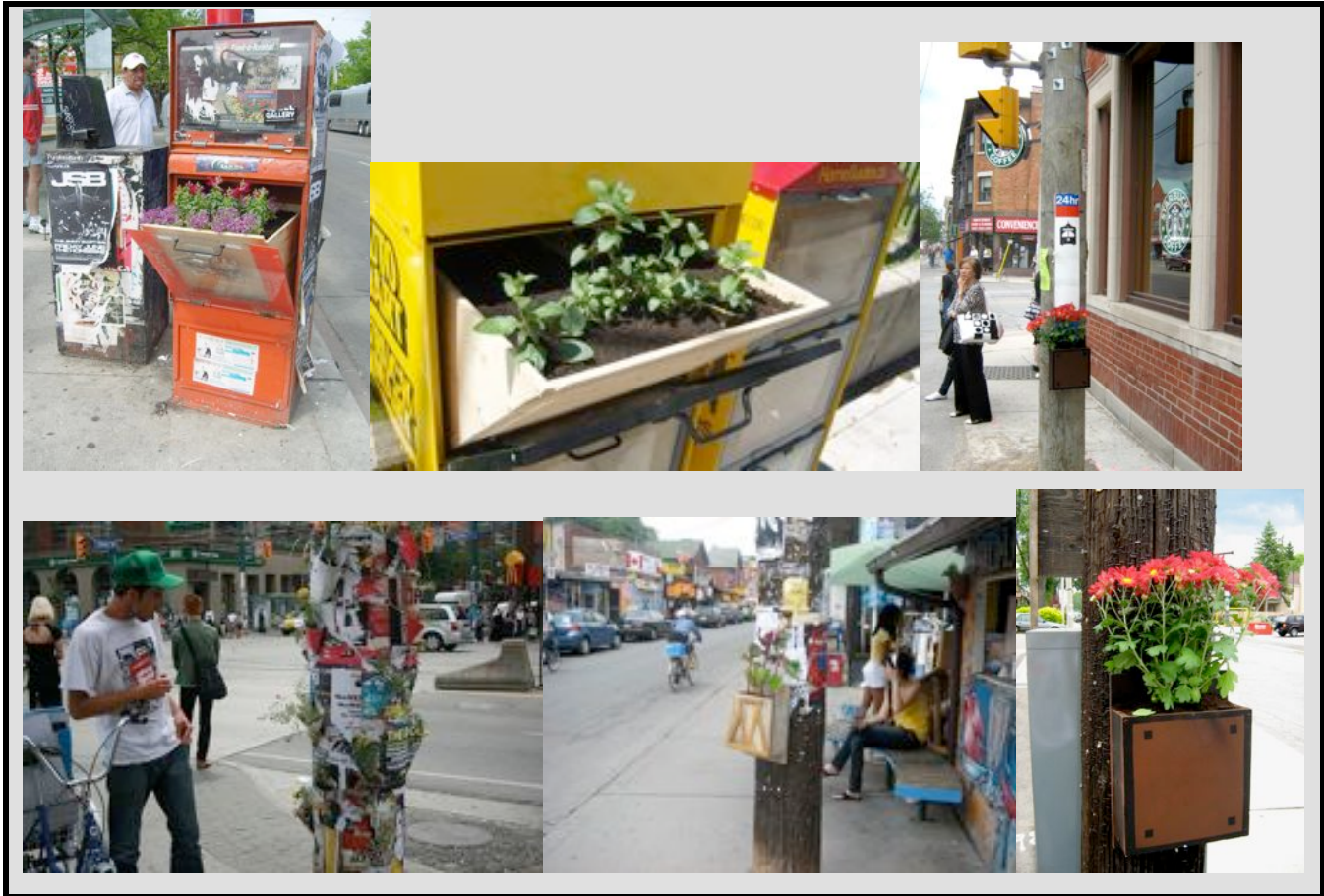
Toronto Guerrilla Gardeners (bike basket planter and College & Bathurst plant)



Toronto Public Space Committee: mostly defunct group (night plant and Queen and Parliament)



ART (as a way to beautify the city or make an artistic statement – see below)



Seed Balls: (15mins)

What do Seed Balls do?

- Seed balls are a simple and successful way to green spaces that are otherwise inaccessible, like abandoned lots, areas beside highways, etc
- Precursors to seed balls
 - Using balloons or old Christmas ornaments filled with soil as a way to throw seeds over high fences. http://www.lizchristygarden.org/lcbh_files/seed_bomb.html
- What are seed balls?
 - They are small balls made of a mixture of clay, compost and wildflower seeds, that are dried and easily portable, so any time you see an area that needs to be greened you can be ready to attack! Preferable to the earlier versions because they leave no waste behind
- How do they work?
 - The clay (a natural material, most of Toronto's soil is high in clay) provides stability, and the compost provides nutrients.
 - The balls are thrown and dispersed around the site. Once a rain comes, the clay and soil melt and the seeds germinate, allowing flowers to grow. Ideally the flowers will spread their seeds in the fall, allowing the site to become a self-perpetuating wildflower field.
- How do you make them?
 - Seed balls are constructed in one of two ways:
 - By combining 1 part compost to 1 part seeds (wildflower) and 5 parts powdered clay.
 - By combining 3 parts compost to 1 part seeds and 1 part solid clay
 - After all parts are mixed by hand in a bowl, water is slowly added to create a mixture which is not sludgy, but still wet enough to compact into balls. The mixture is evenly combined to ensure proper seed distribution and then formed into small balls (1.5 ") and allowed to dry. Students may take the balls home in Ziploc bags for distribution in their own areas.

Discussion (while making Seed Balls)

- What kind of seeds and why
 - The best seeds to pick for seed bombs, and for non-food guerrilla gardening in general are seeds that have 4 qualities: **hardiness, native or non-invasive, food or habitat creating, and beautiful.**
 - Beauty speaks for itself, if your guerrilla garden is beautiful, colourful and eye-catching, it's much more likely to grab peoples attention, make them wonder why someone planted it and what flowers are growing in it, and be viewed as a

contribution to the streetscape. A good thing to consider is when your flowers are going to bloom, and consider planting seeds that will keep your garden colourful year-round.

- For example:

Wild Columbine in Spring

Butterfly weed in Summer

Cardinal Flower in Fall.

- **Hardiness:** means how good the plants are at surviving. If you are throwing seed bombs into an abandoned lot, you're not going to have an easy time getting in there to water and weed. This means you'll want to plant seeds that are resilient, hardy in plant terms, and can grow in soils which are lacking in nutrients and survive without consistent watering. You can look up plants suited to

- waste areas



blue eyed grass

fireweed



milkweed

- meadows



Lupine

aster

black eyed Susan



Serving Suggestions:

Mini Manifesto for Engaged Ecology, from “Guerrilla Gardening, A Manifesto” by David Tracey:

- 1) We have the right to fresh air, clean water and healthy soil
- 2) A government that cannot provide them loses legitimacy
- 3) The earth is in a crisis
- 4) Cities are not the problem, they’re the solution
- 5) Cities are alive and should be treated that way
- 6) Biodiversity is the best measure of a healthy place
- 7) Humans have evolved to live in harmony with nature
- 8) The public creates the best public spaces
- 9) People will care for a place they plant themselves
- 10) Engaged ecology creates a community

Books and Websites

On Guerilla Gardening – Richard Reynolds

Guerrilla Gardening : a manualfesto – David Tracey

Andy’s Northern Wildflowers: www.ontariowildflower.com

-for images of native plants and flowers

David Suzuki Foundation: Toronto Plant Guide for attracting Pollinators

-for ideal native plants to attract pollinators

Toronto Public Space Network: www.publicspace.ca/gardeners.htm

Guerrilla Garden Blog: tpscguerrillagardeners.blogspot.com

Guerrilla Gardening Homepage: www.guerrillagardening.org

Toronto Guerrilla Gardening Art: <http://www.bladediary.com/?s=guerrilla+gardening>

