**SEED NAME ART**

**TIME REQUIRED:** Advanced collection and preparation of materials and 1 hour for the activity.

**PURPOSE**

Students will take part in a tactile visual arts project to examine the diversity of texture, colour and pattern in different seeds. Students will learn to identify and name the plants from which seeds come and use these seeds for visual effect in creating a piece of artwork using the letters of their own name.

**MATERIALS**

* Heavy cardstock paper for students to attach seeds to
* Pencils or markers for drawing the outline of their name
* White glue and glue spreaders/brushes
* A variety of containers or trays for holding and sorting seeds
* Seeds collected from a variety of sources. These can include:
	+ Seeds brought in from home (ex. fresh seeds scooped out of vegetables like pumpkins, peppers, apples etc. or dried seeds such as lentils, peas, beans, coffee or bird seeds)
	+ School garden. After having collected and shared all of the seeds needed to plant next year’s garden, use any remaining seeds for the seed art.
	+ Seeds from old garden seed packs that are old and no longer viable.
	+ Seeds collected outside on school grounds. These can be seeds collected from trees, flowers, weeds etc.

**PREPARATION**

This activity should be undertaken in the fall when garden and wild plants are setting seed. A couple of weeks before the activity send home a letter (sample below) requesting that students bring in a large number and variety of seeds for this project.

**PROCEDURE**

1. Allow students to come to the front of the class and introduce their collected seeds to their classmates. They can relate the names of the seeds, where they come from and how they were harvested. Review or list the names of all of the seeds collected by the class in order to reinforce their identification.

2. Once everyone has introduced their seeds, pour everyone’s collections into a large bucket or container so that they are mixed and can be shared evenly with everyone. Ensure that you have extras on hand for anyone who forgets to bring seeds in. Each student will then get a personal container of seeds to use for decorating their name.

3. Students will write their first name in ‘bubble’ outline letters across the page. Have them consider their design before they start gluing down seeds. Rather than randomly placing seeds have them consider pattern, size, colour and texture in their placement. Perhaps one letter can be made of small, round seeds another with swirls or stripes of different sizes or textures. Perhaps one letter is made of vegetable seeds, and another of flower seeds. Ideally students will be able to identify all of the seeds used in their own art piece.

4. Display the art for all to see with a list of the names of all seeds used!

**Sample Take-Home Letter**

Dear Parent/Caregiver

We are exploring seed biodiversity in our classroom and I would like to ask that your child bring in a few handfuls of seeds that they can collect themselves. The seeds will be used for an art project therefore a variety of seeds of different sizes, textures and colours would be best. Children are encouraged to introduce the seeds by name so practice identifying the seeds by name at home. Seeds can be collected from the insides of common fruits or vegetables, from wild plants or weeds.

Some ideas for collecting seeds:

* Collect dried seeds from your home vegetable or flower garden. Scoop out and dry the seeds from common vegetables and fruit (pumpkin, cucumber, watermelon, apples, pears etc.) or dried seeds such as lentils, peas, beans or bird seed).
* Seeds from old garden seed packs that are old and no longer viable.
* Collect seeds from local trees (ex. winged maple seeds) or weeds (ex. dandelion ‘fluff’).

Note: Please do not bring any seeds from nut trees or poisonous plants due to obvious allergy and health concerns.

Thank you,