

✂ Grow Cards

Objective: To recycle newspaper to create plantable greeting cards.

Time: 30 minutes.

Materials: Newspaper, window screen, bin, water, cookie cutters, blender, flower seed (any seed will do, but larger seeds make the final product more attractive), brown paper bags, raffia, glue.



For this activity, you need to use a window screen or make a screen frame.



Ask the gardeners if they have ever received a card for their birthday, holiday or other special occasion. Then ask if they have ever planted one of those cards in a garden. Tell them that today they will make a greeting card for someone they know that can be planted in the garden and will grow a plant.

Your group will need to gather scraps of paper and tear them into small pieces about the size of postage stamps. Have them fill a blender half full with scraps and $\frac{3}{4}$ full with water. Blend the water and paper mixture on high speed until the mixture has an oatmeal-like consistency. The gardeners can choose a cookie cutter shape they like and place the cutter onto the screen. Next, they should pour the blended paper mixture into the cutter, so a thin layer of the mixture fills in the shape. The gardeners can then sprinkle on a few seeds and push the seeds into the mixture with their fingers.



They should then place the screen with the wet paper shape onto a towel and carefully remove the cutter. Then have them lay another towel over the paper shape and firmly press it to remove most of the remaining water. The paper shape will still be damp, but will be strong enough to keep its form. The card should dry and be ready for giving in a day or two.



Because the cards have seeds embedded in them, they can be planted. The seeds will germinate and the paper pulp will break down in the soil.

If they attach ribbon or raffia to the grow card, it can be given as a hanging ornament. The group can also cut rectangles (about 8 by 6 inches) from a brown paper bag, fold the paper in half and then attach the grow card to the front. Special messages can be written inside. Have the group experiment using a combination of different types and colors of papers when blending the mixture for the grow cards.

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in the classroom

Have the gardeners write a short paragraph explaining what a grow card is and how to plant it. This can be copied neatly on the back of the brown paper part of the card so the recipient will know what to do with it.