

## A BLOOMING VALENTINE



Roses are red, violets are blue, we have the perfect valentine for you! This February 14, give your valentines a gift that they'll love, and other wildlife will too.

### Wild about Wildflowers

A bright pink Common Milkweed, or a yellow Wild Indigo growing on the edge of a meadow, are examples of wildflowers—they were not planted by anyone and grew in the wild on their own. Some flowers are native plants, or have occurred naturally in the region for thousands of years. Other non-native wildflowers evolved in other parts of the world, but were introduced to new places by people, through intention or accident.

Many native wildflower seeds need the cold of winter before they can germinate, so if you try to plant them now, press them into the soil and be sure to give them a good cover of fallen leaves to protect them from extremes of cold and wind.

### Base of a Food Web

Did you know that native wildflowers do more than just feed pollinators with their tasty nectar? They also provide the foundation of your neighborhood's food web. For example, in order for birds to feed their hungry chicks, they first need to find juicy, nutritious insects. Many of these tasty insects need plants to munch on to grow. In fact, some insects can only live on particular native plants, called host plants.

### A Valentine's Day Treat

Instead of giving your friends and family chocolate treats and store-bought flowers for Valentine's Day, spread the love while supporting nature with native wildflower seed bombs. As soon as the weather warms in the spring, they can plant these seed bombs in their garden and watch the flowers grow over the next couple of years.



Use the directions below to make your own seed bomb for your valentine to plant. Not sure which native seeds to use? Check out our page on New England native wildflowers at [massaudubon.org/pollinatorgarden](https://massaudubon.org/pollinatorgarden).

### MATERIALS

- 4-6 pieces of recycled paper scraps (can be old newspaper or construction paper)
- Two bowls
- Water
- A blender or food processor
- A fine strainer
- 2-6 tablespoons of native wildlife seeds
- Baking sheet or cupcake tin
- Scissors (optional)



### DIRECTIONS

1. Start by cutting or ripping pieces of paper into one-inch squares or smaller, until you have about 2 cups worth of shredded paper.
2. Place shredded paper into one bowl and fill with water until completely covered. Let soak for about 20 minutes.
3. After 20 minutes, drain extra water from the bowl and put the wet paper into a blender or food processor. Blend until the mixture is mushy, but not super watery. If there is too much water, add in more pieces of paper.
4. Pour wet paper pulp into a fine strainer and let drain. Remove all the water you can.
5. Put pulp into a new bowl.
6. Add 2-6 tablespoons of native wildflower seeds to the pulp and mix with your hands.
7. Scoop out paper/seed pulp and roll into a large gumball-size ball. Place on baking sheet or cupcake tin. If the paper isn't sticking and is too dry, add a little bit of water (not too much) to help balls stick together.
8. Leave the seed bombs on the baking sheet or cupcake tin to set in a dry place for 24 hours. Once fully dry, take out seed bombs. Store them in a cool dark place.
9. Give seed bombs to your friends and family to plant and water to grow in the spring.