Growing Your Seeds

What you will need

Native plant seeds

Recycled seed trays or pots (sterilised)

Seed potting mix or vermiculite (sterilised)

Spray bottle

Ruler (optional)

Gardening gloves

Labels and marker pen

Growing Your Seeds

What to do

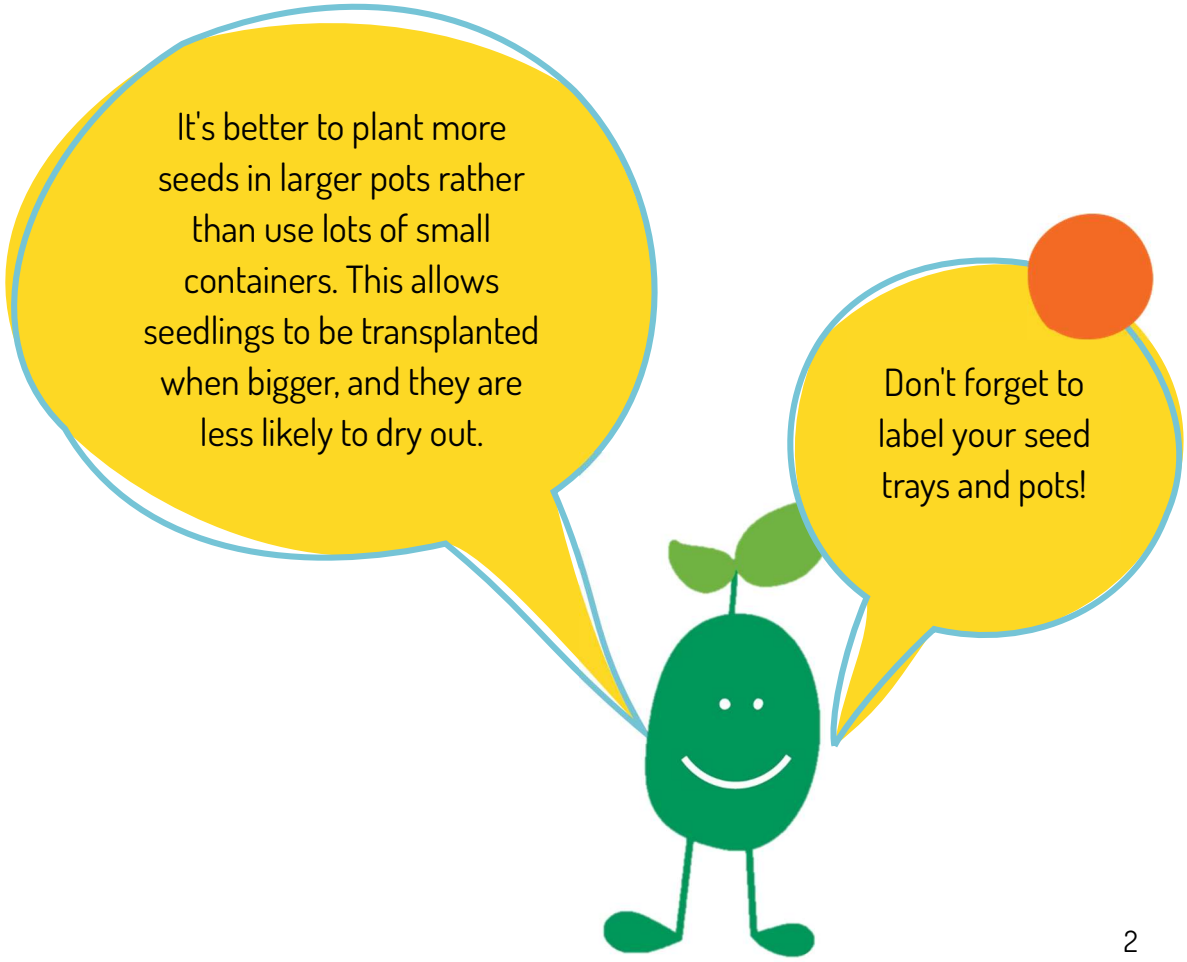
1. Fill your seed trays or pots with potting mix.

2. Plant the seeds according to the size of the seed:

- Sprinkle really small seeds (< 1 mm) on the soil surface - they don't need to be covered.
- Sprinkle slightly larger seeds on the surface of the potting soil and then cover with a thin layer of potting mix or vermiculite (depth = several times the diameter of the seed).
- Push larger seeds into the potting soil one by one and cover with potting mix (depth = half or same diameter as the seed).

3. Label each pot with the plant name and date of planting.

4. Gently water the seeds using a spray bottle. Don't over-water - keep the soil moist but not waterlogged.



Growing Your Seeds – Teacher Resource

Suggested Lesson time – 1 lesson, approximately 50 minutes.

This lesson will teach students how to propagate native seeds from their planting site, and help them understand the importance of native plants in our natural environment. It can be a standalone lesson or be combined with any other worksheet and lessons in the Habitat Warriors program (for example, 'Handmade Seed Pots' and 'Handmade Seed Bombs').

At the end of this lesson students will:

- Carry out the steps necessary for planting seeds and provide care to promote seed germination.
- Understand the importance and role of native plants in our natural environment.

This lesson can be made suitable for all primary levels – suggestions on how you could 'level up' the lesson are also given, while links to the Victorian Curriculum can provide additional ideas.

Basic Lesson Outline

Explain why native plants are essential for our local environment - to support local wildlife and promote biodiversity, and are better suited to the local climate. Explain why it's important to grow native seeds that are found in your local area (i.e. they are well suited to the local climate). Native seeds are commonly used in revegetation ("direct seeding") as this is a cheaper way to revegetate large areas.

- Ask students why native plants are important for our environment
- What are some benefits of growing native plants from seeds?
- What factors do you think influence the growth of seeds?

Provide students with the 'Growing Your Seeds' worksheet. Demonstrate how to plant seeds of different sizes. Emphasise the importance of labelling their pots or seed trays with the plant name and date to help keep track of their growth. Show students how to gently water plants (i.e. soil moist but not soaked).

Class discussion

- What did you enjoy most about planting your seeds?
- What differences do you notice between the different seeds that you planted?
- Why is it important to label our seedling trays/pots with the plant name and date?
- How can we make sure that our seedlings get the right amount of light and water?
- Why is it important to grow plants from seeds that are found in our local area (i.e. "local provenance")
- How can the native plants that will grow from these seeds help our local environment? How can they support our local wildlife?

Lesson Level Up

There are multiple ways to extend and expand this lesson to make it more comprehensive and/or introduce more complex topics for older children/year levels. For example:

Expand the Science component:

- Plant the native seeds in different controlled micro-climates (varying light, temperature and humidity) to see how these factors influence growth. Ask students to report on the findings of their experiments.
- Ask groups of students to investigate one natural method of native seed dispersal (e.g. wind, water, wildlife). Each group can create a poster to share with the class.
- Ask students to investigate the pros and cons of using direct seeding vs planting seedlings for habitat restoration.

Expand the English component:

- Ask students to research a specific native plant species that grows at their planting site, including its ecological role and cultural significance, and create a brochure with facts and pictures.
- Ask students to design posters that encourage their family, friends and local community to plant native species.
- Hold a class debate on the benefits of native plants versus non-native plants in their local area.

The complexity of this section could be adjusted depending on year level.

Detailed Curriculum Links

Science			
	Foundation – Level 2	**Level 3 – Level 4**	**Level 5 – Level 6**
Science Understanding			
Science as a human endeavour	People use science in their daily lives.	Science knowledge helps people to understand the effects of their actions.	Scientific understandings, discoveries and inventions are used to inform personal. and community decisions and to solve problems that directly affect people's lives.
Biological sciences	Living things have a variety of external features and live in different places where their basic needs, including food, water and shelter, are met.	Living things can be grouped on the basis of observable features and can be distinguished from non-living things.	Living things have structural features and adaptations that help them to survive in their environment
Science Inquiry Skills			
Questioning and Predicting	Respond to and pose questions, and make predictions about familiar objects and events.	With guidance, identify questions in familiar contexts that can be investigated scientifically and predict what might happen based on prior knowledge.	With guidance, pose questions to clarify practical problems or inform a scientific investigation, and predict what the findings of an investigation might be based on previous experiences or general rules.

Science			
	Foundation – Level 2	**Level 3 – Level 4**	**Level 5 – Level 6**
Communicating	Represent and communicate observations and ideas about changes in objects and events in a variety of ways.	Represent and communicate observations, ideas and findings to show patterns and relationships using formal and informal scientific language.	Communicate ideas and processes using evidence to develop explanations of events and phenomena and to identify simple cause-and-effect relationships.
English			
Language			
Phonics and Word Knowledge			
Literacy			
Interpreting, analysing, evaluating Texts in context			