

Activity: Herbs Goal: Physical Populations: All

## TH Activity Plan – Sowing Herb Seeds Directly into Ground

Text by Diane Relf, PhD, HTM, Mary Predney & Lesley Fleming, HTR

Photos by Worthpoint Inc. & D. Relf



**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:** Participants will plant herb seeds directly into ground in the garden.

**THERAPEUTIC GOALS:**

**Cognitive/Intellectual:** Follow directions; read seed package; expand knowledge of herbs

**Physical:** Improve performance on plant tasks (sowing seeds in ground)

**Psychological/Emotional:** Observe & appreciate cycle of growth as plant seeds germinate & grow

**Sensory:** Handle small items, touch soil & water

**Social:** Grow food/herbs for self or community; share garden space

**STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:**

1. **Pre-Session Prep:** Prepare garden soil with amendments if needed. Prepare envelopes with 3-5 seeds in each, labelled with plant name, preferably with photo from garden catalogue. Process – use one envelope described to grow one plant (ie. 6 envelopes with 3 seeds for 6 plants).
2. Facilitator begins sessions by placing garden design on display board near garden for reference & discussion.
3. Leader discusses plants, growing needs of herbs & garden plan.
4. Participants or leader mark the area where seeds are to be planted with white sand. Make small but visible lines where the rows are to be dug.
5. Each person makes plant tags for the plants they choose to plant, with plant name & date. The corner of envelope can be cut to allow for seed to come out one at a time.
6. Seeds are planted following guide & row lines, placing tags in sand, allowing for height & spread of plants. Plant one envelope per person at a time to avoid confusion.
7. Sprinkle soil sparingly on seeds, covering seeds with small amount of soil and gently patting down, making good contact with soil.
8. Lightly water (misting or sprinkling). Determine schedule for monitoring & watering seeds.
9. Clean up area. Participants wipe or wash hands.

**Materials**

herb seed varieties  
(dill, borage, parsley, fennel,  
chamomile)  
envelopes  
plant tags  
marker  
white sand  
garden design  
watering can  
gloves & wipes

**APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS:** Appropriate for most populations though individuals with cognitive deficits may find handling seeds tempting to put in mouth & may be confused about garden plan & implementation. This can be addressed by partnering them with a volunteer or staff. Larger seeds can be used for ease of vision, manual dexterity or other health challenges. Therapeutic goals can cover physical & sensory elements as identified in goal box above; these may be relevant to several different populations. Cognitive/intellectual goals

of following directions, reading seed packets & understanding the garden plan can be adapted for all ages & abilities. Participants can assist others or focus on one part of planting such as watering.

**SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS:** Not appropriate for populations with cognitive deficits, developmental delays or youngsters who may put seeds into mouths. Prior determination of plant sensitivities or allergies should be undertaken.

**NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:** To maximize accessibility, raised beds or containers can be used instead of in-ground gardening. Adaptive gardening techniques - using seed sticks, seed tape (seeds embedded in biodegradable tape) can be considered. Adapting this activity so that a focus on food production & its link to food security can be integrated into a therapeutic intervention with a social goal - community service, food & plant donations to community gardens or social service agencies. This would also allow for delivery of session to people with food insecurity (population).

This activity provides for vertical & horizontal programming. Related activities in prior sessions, particularly for multi-session programming can include *Preparing Soil for Outdoor Planting*, *Designing the Herb Garden*, or *Harvesting from the Garden*, these activities are part of THAD database.

#### REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

Warkentin, S. (2022). When and how to direct sow seeds. *Burpee.com*.

<https://www.burpee.com/blog/when-and-how-to-direct-sow-seeds.html>

RHS. (n.d.). How to sow seeds outdoors. <https://www.rhs.org.uk/propagation/how-to-sow-seeds-outdoors>

Yankee Publishing Inc. (2023). Sowing seeds in the vegetable garden. *Almanac.com*.

<https://www.almanac.com/sowing-seeds-vegetable-garden>



Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2023.

TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2023.