



RATTLESNAKE GARDENERS

Before you begin...



This activity is designed to raise awareness of the ecological impact and benefits of our native rattlesnake species!

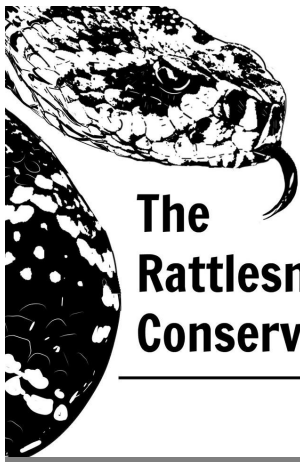
Rattlesnakes are often misunderstood, feared, and even killed unnecessarily by people who think they're protecting themselves and their loved ones. This senseless killing, along with habitat loss has led to a decline in our native rattlesnake populations. In order to save the buzztails, it's important to recognize the critical role that they play in our ecosystem and foster a deep understanding and appreciation for these amazing animals in future generations!

Directions

1. Prepare the activity by pouring potting soil in a large bucket and emptying your seeds into a bowl so students can help themselves.
2. Follow the included classroom information sheet to discuss with your class some ecological benefits of our native rattlesnake species like pest control and seed dispersal. Ask questions! Did you know that rattlesnakes are important for their ecosystem?
3. Begin planting! Allow students to fill their seed starter pots with soil and direct them to gently place a few seeds in the center.
4. Help students pat the seeds into the soil, and spray them with water until the soil is damp.

You will need...

1. Classroom information sheet (included)
2. Biodegradable seed starter pots
3. Potting soil
4. Large bucket
5. Small shovel
6. Native wildflower seeds
7. Small bowl
8. Spray bottle of water



**The
Rattlesnake
Conservancy**

RATTLESNAKE GARDENERS

did you know...

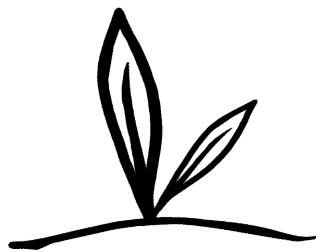


Did you know that predators such as rattlesnakes could help to disperse viable seeds far from the parent plant, making them important for ecosystem dynamics?!

According to a recent study, seeds consumed by a mouse that would otherwise be digested can still sprout and grow - if the mouse is eaten by a rattlesnake first. A team of researchers led by Randall Reiserer at the University of California, Berkeley, discovered a total of 971 seeds that had been collected by rodents inside the stomachs of rattlesnakes. Seeds cannot germinate after passing through a rodent's digestive system, but the team found germinated seeds inside some of the snakes. This suggests that the reptiles can rescue seeds collected by rodents that otherwise wouldn't grow.
Proc. R. Soc. B (2018)



You can be a rattlesnake gardener, too!



Use these supplies to plant your own seed, and watch it grow. When it's ready, you can plant the whole container in a sunny spot in your own garden!