

### **Marigolds: fall seed pods to plant in spring**

Kindergarteners take a short garden walk in fall to collect Marigold seed pods to save for spring planting. Marigolds are ideal flowers for young children to grow: seeds pods are big and individual seeds easy to handle. Children can count the seeds – does each pod have the same number of seeds? Collecting, saving, and germinating seeds (and perhaps even planting back out into the garden for next year’s Kindergarteners!) helps children experience first hand the life cycle of annual flowers.

Garden parents can provide small envelopes for each child to label/decorate with their name, plant name, or a drawing. They can also overwinter the box of class seeds in their homes and return for planting in cups in classrooms in spring.

Marigolds have a unique smell and are often planted alongside vegetables to deter bugs and animals from eating garden plants. Poll the children to see how many like the smell and how many don’t: do more boys than girls like the smell? What about the teachers? Tally or graph the results.

### **Winter Class Seed Collection**

Students can look for seeds outside of school and each bring one in for show and tell. Apple seeds were already discussed, what about other seeds found in the kitchen or yard? Each seed can be glued to a thick piece of cardboard and labeled by name then displayed in class. Which seeds look similar (apples/pears) which seeds look very different (devil’s heads/gumdrop trees)? Some plants are related and come from the same plant family so their seeds might look similar - just like siblings in a family often look alike. Why might some seeds be spiky and others smooth?

Seed collections help children look for patterns (like scientists do) and help them draw connections between natural form and function (devil’s head seeds are spiky so they won’t be washed away by strong river currents and will stick in the mud for roots to attach). Children could imagine and draw pictures of themselves as ‘seeds’ too: “If you were a seed, what would you look like?” I run fast so I’d be a smooth, round seed,” etc.