

Make & Take

ACTIVITY

Cover Crop Monster

Plant seeds and make a monster that will sprout hair!

Materials



- Nylon sock
- Potting soil
- Grass seeds
- Mini elastic bands
- Flat thumb tacks
- Sticker eyes
- Condiment cup
- Tablespoon
- Plastic cup

Tips



Grass seed can be replaced with rye or wheat seeds.

Sending the cover crop monster home in a sandwich bag helps with transportation.

Remind youth to keep their cover crop monster watered, they can trim their monster's "hair" as it grows.



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Garner Interest

1. Explain to youth that farmers often plant crop after they harvest their yearly cash crop such as corn or soybeans in Nebraska. These crops are called cover crops. Ask students, "Why might a farmer want to plant a cover crop in their field?"
2. Accept responses and reply with the explanation that cover crops provide a root structure that holds soil in place and prevents soil erosion. Soil erosion occurs when the topsoil is displaced due to heavy rain or wind. In Nebraska, cover crops that farmers will plant are oats, rye, turnips, or winter wheat. These cover crops grow, replenishing nutrients in the soil, suppressing weeds, and protecting the topsoil from erosion for the next growing season.

Conduct Activity

1. Place the nylon sock over the plastic cup.
2. Scoop one tablespoon of grass seed and place it in the sock.
3. Use the condiment cup or a spoon to scoop up soil placing it in the sock until the sock is about the size of a baseball.
4. Take the sock off the plastic cup, use fingers to mix the grass seed and the soil together.
5. Tie a knot to close the sock.
6. Use mini elastic bands to create the monster face.
7. Use flat thumb tacks to give the monster eyes.
8. Take sticker eyes and place them on the flat thumb tacks.
9. Place crop monster in a condiment cup and place in a sealable bag to take home.
10. Remind youth to water their crop monster and keep the soil moist.
11. Watch the crop monster grow and cut the "hair" when needed.

Make a Connection to Agriculture

Plants are a part of our everyday life! From the food we eat to the clothes we wear, to the cars we drive; we can give credit to plants! Plants that are grown for human use are called crops. Farmers must protect the topsoil to grow crops. One-way farmers protect their soil is to plant cover crops after they harvest their seasonal cash crops.