

NAME OF HORTICULTURE THERAPY PRESENTATION ACTIVITY:

KOKEDAMA-MOSS BALL



OBJECTIVES:

EDUCATION

Kokedama is a centuries-old garden form that originated in Japan. It is also known as the poor man's bonsai. Kokedama is the practice of taking the root ball of a plant and suspending it in a mud ball, which is then coated with soft green moss. Moss has no roots and does not require a lot of soil or fertilizer. What you're seeing as you look at a mat of moss are leaves and stems that directly absorb water and nutrients. Moss is relatively easy to grow. Moss needs two things to grow: daylight (not direct sun) and moisture. The more often it gets water, the faster it grows, but it doesn't need deep watering.

Kokedama is a living planter as well as a distinctive display piece. Kokedama may be fixed to a piece of driftwood or bark, suspended from a string or nestled in a clear, attractive container.

ACTIVITY

Participants will follow step-by step directions to create their own Kokedama ball. Participants will have the opportunity to touch moss, soil, and select a centerpiece plant of their choice. Participant will complete the Kokedama ball project. Participants will be provided the opportunity to interact with peers and staff through conversation and eye contact as observed by master gardener assistants. Participant will have the opportunity to show their creation to the rest of the group. Participant will be provided the opportunity to express level of satisfaction with finished project. This horticulture therapy activity seeks

TAKE AWAY

This horticulture group activity seeks to provide participants with opportunities for experiencing a sense of purpose, feelings of well-being, and mastery of the task. And, seeks to improve components of movement, physical, cognitive and social functioning. Participants will follow step-by step directions to create their own rock garden with succulents. Participants will have the opportunity to touch plants, soil & sand, rocks and other items from nature, and select a garden dish. Participant will complete the rock garden with succulent project. Participant will be provided the opportunity to express level of satisfaction with finished project.

MATERIALS

Typical number of participants is eight (8). It is not unusual to have more (mostly family members) or less.

Green moss (pick from nature or purchase) Not Spanish moss that is actually not a moss but a rootless bromeliad air plant that gets nutrients and moisture from the air.



- Centerpiece plant (any available plant will work) Presenter will provide information and education regarding their centerpiece plant(s) of choice
- The main soil is a mix of peat moss and your choice of average potting soil
- Twine, thread or fishing line – for hanging balls, non-biodegradable line is best
- Scissors
- Water
- Gloves - although moss is not harmful to the touch, protect your hands from the dirt
- Bucket
- Participant name tags
- Two completed project forms. One, for BRI, the other mailed to the Extension Office

DURING CLASS

Project leader will introduce self and share information regarding the UA Master Gardner program. Each Master Gardner will introduce them self and share a personal & brief account of their gardening expertise, a gardening experience, or Master Gardener affiliation. Participants will be encouraged, but not required, to introduce their self and share their gardening interest. An introduction to the program and brief introduction to Kokedama will be provided. Moss will be passed around for tactile and scent stimulation. Centerpiece houseplants will be selected by participant. Using a completed Kokedama ball project, a description of the project and steps will be introduced. The completed Kokedama ball will be displayed throughout the presentation. Master Gardeners will oversee attendees' participation and assist only as needed.

INFORMATION/DESCRIPTION/FACTS

How does making a Kokedama work? You begin by mixing peat moss and soil, then slowly add water until the compound adheres as a ball. This will be your base.



Wrap the roots of the houseplant in the damp sphagnum moss, bind it in twine, and insert into the soil ball.



Finish off with sheet moss and more twine to secure. Once your Kokedama is finished, you will need to water it, so prepare a bucket which contains enough water to cover the green moss ball (not the plant) and leave it soaking for about 10 minutes. Spritz with water daily as needed.



Don't feel limited to hanging it. It will make an impact in a clear bowl or on a wooden shelf as well.



STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Participant will mix the soil and make a ball. Important to making a Kokedama ball is to mix the soil well. If the consistency of the soil is too loose it will break when it's watered. You know the consistency is right when you are able to make a ball without it breaking apart. The ball can be any size, chose a size that matches the size of your plant.
2. Participant will remove the soil off centerpiece plant, be thorough but gentle.
3. Instruct participant how to break the ball in half. Participant will follow instructions
4. Instruct participant how to insert their plant gently into the middle of the broken ball & close the shape back into a ball. Participant will follow instructions
5. Instruct participant how to cover the ball with the moss. Press firmly into the soil continuing to create a circular and compact shape. Make sure that all the open spaces are covered with moss. Participants will follow instructions
6. Participant will wind twine around the ball to secure. If they want a hanging ball leave the string as long as needed.
7. After participant has made the Kokedama ball, have participant water it. Prepare a bucket which contains enough water to cover the green moss ball (not the plant) and leave it soaking for about 10 minutes.
8. To maintain, water the Kokedama with a spray bottle once a day, preferably in the morning to mimic the dew effect, or when the ball feels light in weight, submerge in water as noted above.



KOKEDAMA CARE: WHEN AND HOW TO WATER. Caring for Kokedama can be very easy. Follow these steps to keep your Kokedama healthy and vibrant.

1. CHECK THE WEIGHT OF THE KOKEDAMA

Pick up the Kokedama and feel its weight in your hand. If it feels light, it's time to water it. If this is your first time checking your Kokedama's weight, go through the watering process this time and then take note of the weight of a freshly watered Kokedama for future reference.

2. PUT THE KOKEDAMA IN A CONTAINER

Place the Kokedama in a watering container. We like to use glass containers because you can see the Kokedama as you water and because they are easy to clean. If you don't have a glass container, any container that holds water will do.

3. PREPARE SOME ROOM TEMPERATURE WATER

Draw some fresh water that is as close to room temperature as possible from the tap. Matching the temperature helps to minimize shock for the Kokedama when it gets watered.

4. POUR WATER INTO THE CONTAINER

Pour enough water into your container to cover 1/3 to 1/2 of the moss ball. If your moss ball is already quite dry, filling up more water may cause the Kokedama to float and tip over and possibly damage it if it has delicate flowers or stems.

5. TAKE A TEN MINUTE BREAK

Let the Kokedama sit in water for 10 minutes to soak up the water. It is important to give it enough time to absorb water into the center of the moss ball where the soil is. We like to take this time to make a cup of tea and relax.

6. DRAIN EXCESS WATER AND WEIGH IN YOUR HAND

Take the Kokedama out and drain excess water. This can take a minute or two. When it is no longer dripping, the Kokedama is ready for display until the next time it needs water. You may wish to take note of its weight for future reference.

7. PLACE THE KOKEDAMA IN WELL LIT AREA

Now that the Kokedama has been watered, place it back on display in a well-lit area that is out of direct sunlight. Check the weight of the Kokedama every two days until you learn how often it needs to be watered.

Kokedama.ca/care.html

SOURCE REFERENCE

- www.designsponge.com
- BHG.com/Kokedama (video)
- *Moss Appeal*, Better Homes and Gardens, January 2013, page 38-43

HANDOUT: Kokedama.ca/care.html