Cooperative Extension’s Ability Garden presents

Making Grass Heads

This is a simple arts and crafts project in which participants can design, decorate and grow their very own grass head. A grass head that has had time to grow looks a lot like a Chia Pet, and is just as much fun. This project allows individuals to take their finished project home with them and watch it grow!

Precautions: This project requires the use of a hot glue gun, which should be done under close supervision. You may choose to designate one or two people to be in charge of using the glue guns and glue everyone’s work.

Target Population: 4 years to adulthood

Activity Treatment Goal: The following treatment goals will be addressed by individuals participating in this activity:
- Increase social interaction
- Increase fine motor skills
- Life cycle lesson in which the grass seeds sprout within one day and last as “hair” for 3-4 weeks

Completion Time: 45-60 Minutes
**Materials Needed:** You will need the following materials and tools to complete this project:
- Scissors
- Pantyhose (Knee-highs work well, but longer pairs can be cut)
- Plastic pots or sturdy plastic cups to hold grass seed (large Solo cups work well)
- Potting soil
- Grass seed (Rye grass works well)
- Small shovels (Large spoons can also be used)
- Rubber bands
- Glue gun
- Variety of colored, decorative buttons
- Plastic bowls (to pass around the buttons)
- Pipe cleaners (found at an arts & crafts store)
- Glass jars, or sturdy plastic cups which will hold the water and have the grass head sitting on the rim

**Pre-session Preparation:** You will want to do the following before the activity begins:
- Make a sample, to use as a visual aid and so you are comfortable with all the steps
- Plug in the glue gun, so it will be ready
- Make a few pairs of eyeglasses by bending the pipe cleaners

**Step-By-Step Instructions:**
1. Using scissors, cut out 12-inch strips from a pair of old pantyhose, or use knee-highs. If you are not using the toe end of the hose, tie a knot in one end of each strip to create a bag. Turn your knotted bag inside out (this is not necessary with a toe piece).
2. To make it easy to fill the bags, put each piece into a plastic pot and stretch the open end of the bag over the rim of the pot.
3. Pass around the container of grass seed and let each person put in one spoonful of grass seed into the bottom of the pantyhose bag, which is in the plastic pot. Note: too much seed will inhibit vigorous growth.
4. With the shovel/spoon, fill the pantyhose bag to the top of the pot/cup with soil, pressing the soil down firmly to pack it tightly in the pot. You are putting the soil on top of the grass seed.
5. To test the size of the grass head, remove the pantyhose bag from the plastic pot/cup and observe its size. It should be about the size of your fist. If the grass head is not large enough, you may need to add soil with the bag out of the pot. If there is too much soil, carefully remove it with your shovel/spoon, making sure not to disturb the grass seed.
6. Tie a knot at the open end of your pantyhose bag. Make sure the knot is as close to the soil as possible, making a firm ball. This prevents the soil from slipping down when you turn your head over. You will be left with a “tail” which will be the bottom of the head.
7. Once the bag is tied, carefully place it upright on the glass or plastic container, with the knotted end on the bottom (be careful to keep the grass seed in the top area of the bag).

8. With your fingers, mold bag into desired shape (tall, short, round, etc.), you may also choose to mold ears, eyes, or nose, by pinching small balls of dirt and securing the balls with a rubber band. Any of these features may also be made with buttons.

9. To make button features, pick out the number of buttons you need and use the hot glue gun to attach the buttons to the grass head (this part of the project may be too difficult and/or dangerous for some participants to complete without help). It often works well to set up a glue station, where the participants take their head to be glued by a supervisor when they are ready.

10. For a mouth, glasses, eyebrows, or anything else you can think of, cut the pipe cleaners into appropriate lengths, bending and twisting into desired shapes. Using the glue gun, attach your creations to the grass head.

11. Tada! Look and laugh at the funny people everyone has made!

12. Instruct your participants how to take care of their grass heads at home: place the grass head over a jar or cup, filled half way with water, making sure the “tail” is down in the container touching the water. This “tail” acts as a wick to draw the water up into the head. The heads can also be placed in a small dish of water.

13. It is very important to make sure the head gets thoroughly wet the first time it is watered! To do this get a pan of water and give the heads a “bath”. Keep the heads moist by making sure there is some water in the container at all times.

14. Place the head in a sunny place and watch the “hair” grow, as the grass gets long, give your head and haircut!

Enrichment Opportunities:
- Discuss what grass seed needs to start to grow (germinate): water, light, soil.
- Teach participates that the more they give their heads a “haircut” the better the grass will grow.
- Discuss the life cycle of the grass, which is about 6 weeks. This fact can be related to the cycles of other plants, animals, and even people.

Performance Areas:
- **Education:** This is a great chance to give participants a hands-on lifecycle lesson, which they can take home and observe. It also provides a chance to learn about how plants germinate.
- **Vocation:** This activity can be designed for multi-step directions.
- **Rehabilitation:** This activity can be used to practice fine motor skills, increase social skills, promote creativity and self-expression and improve self-esteem.
- **Leisure/Recreation:** This is a great activity to encourage laughter and fun.

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