Community Growing

A Volunteer Handbook

March 2025

SUSTAINABLE FOOD CORNWALL

Cornwall National Landscape

Symbiosis Soil Lab

Contents

Events

Events are a great way of bringing your community together and demonstrating the importance of your site and all the good work you're doing.

Any event you can manage during your busy year can bring in potential income and people in the community that may come to volunteer or sign up for a veg box. It can be a lot of work to setup an event, so the workload needs to be shared.

Seasonal events ỳ such as Autumn & Spring open days

Community growing is all about engagement and seasonal events that bring young and old from your neighbourhood together, can add joy and colour to your space and their faces! Such events can also make money if, for example, you can sell cooked food, ask for donations from stall holders, have a raffle and sell your own plants and veg etc.

Your event could incorporate live music, dancing, children's games such as apple bobbing or egg hunts, presentations, children's craft workshops, knife sharpening, bike maintenance, jumble and book sales, site tours, a May pole and having places to sit to enjoy a plate of food or cake and a cuppa!

You could set up a volunteer recruitment table and a plant your own sunflower or tomato session, the list is endless, but it all requires extra people and time.

Calling in help may not be in your nature but there is likely someone or a team of people who would enjoy helping. There may also be other local organisations who would like to support the event by lending gazebos, kitchen equipment or just themselves. Once you have done one or two of these events, they become easier. Events are always a lot of work and are usually weather dependant, people tend to come out in most weathers, especially if children need entertaining.

If you wish to sell alcohol or are selling tickets to see a band you are likely to have to apply for a Temporary Event licence from Cornwall Council costing £21. If you are not sure if it's necessary, call them on 01872 324210. Fete type events tend not to need such a licence though.

Wassail and Apple Days

With the fantastic resurgence of the appreciation of our orchards, and a celebration of fruit production, such events can make a lovely choice, especially if of course you have or are planting fruit trees.

Apple Days are a more modern take on the Wassail and can combine with Halloween which can offer even more activities for children to enjoy.

Wassails can take place in Jan and Feb but were traditionally on the 12th night after Christmas and Apple Days 21st October.

People need plenty of notice, as costumes may be involved, though headdress making can be incorporated into the event, which can give people a pretty decoration to take home. You will need time to arrange, publicise and you may well need to pull in some favours, such as from local musicians, someone with confidence to lead the wassail, craft makers perhaps, who can share skills and/ or sell suitable crafts, cooks for refreshments, a local group that has an apple press etc. They don't have to be massive affairs, but having somewhere to gather, perhaps some games or some other things to focus on, so people can mingle and chat, is jolly, especially in winter!

If you can harvest some apples locally, and borrow a press from another local organisation, the event can include the making of fresh apple juice. Other ideas include apple bobbing, selling apple-based food, inviting local apple juice or cider makers, local tree planting groups, and local food producers if you are thinking big. You could also bring in an apple expert who could help identify varieties and an organisation selling fruit trees.

More useful guidance:

- Information on hosting a Wassail event.
- Wassail directory
- Apple day origins.

Open Farm Sunday

Don't be put off that most farms that get involved with Open Farm Sunday are larger than yours, you can still utilise this opportunity to get support, ideas and potentially entice a different demographic of local residents into your space.

There are great resources available through LEAF on the Farm Sunday website. You can sign up for free and receive their guidebook, including ideas and risk assessment info. They also offer recordings of webinars and in person meetings to learn from other, more experienced farm hosts.

The date varies from year to year and you do not need to stick to the exact date if it doesn't fit in with you, but opening on a Sunday close to the one promoted by LEAF will help with publicity.

Again, the event can be big or small, a walk and talk or something more involved, with games, talks, food, raffle, presentations perhaps. It is though certainly an opportunity to perhaps reach a wider, perhaps more conservative audience, to shine a light on your growing techniques, nutritious crops and volunteer opportunities.

Details about Opening your Farm can be found here.

Resources and ideas for the day include:

- Presentations to linking soil, gut and human health. You copy, adapt and offer some of these freely available here.
- Games are great to get children and adults involved. These can include Tug o war, hoopla, scavenger hunts, welly wrangling, tombola, lucky dip, or a farm variant of "how many sweets in a jar?". Inspiration for outdoor games can be found on this website.

Occasional Volunteer Sessions

Volunteers always appreciate coming away having learnt something new and the following jobs can be incorporated too with learning.

Compost spreading & no dig workshops

Compost spreading in spring, helps to prepare the soil for the upcoming growing season, ensuring that your plants have the nutrients they need when they start to grow. Spreading compost in the autumn, after the growing season has finished, allows it to break down slowly over winter, enriching the soil and making it ready for the next planting season.

Time requirements

Usually best done over a few hours with a large group of volunteers. Can be done in shorter periods depending on the bed size for compost. Good idea to switch up roles so no one is left doing the 'heavy lifting' for a long period of time. Tea and biscuits are always a welcome break. Different roles can be divided up depending on mobility if it is a mixed group.

Community engagement ideas

- During tea/lunch and whilst at work you can explain the reasons and benefits to the no dig approach and how it can benefit the volunteers own garden or allotment.
- It's a good idea to allow a Q&A to be incorporated during the day. If you don't yet feel confident, it may be worth trying to find £95 for a course by Charles Dowding or researching online beforehand, so you are well prepared.

Step-by-step session

Step 1: Start by explaining the task, the tools and how the session will run. If there is lots of lifting heavy wheelbarrows it will be good to explain health and safety.

Step 2: Start by clearing the area of any weeds, debris, or leftover plants. This helps to ensure that the compost will mix thoroughly with the soil.

Step 3: If creating no dig beds. Spread a layer of cardboard across the bed width. Ideally two layers of cardboard if you have enough, or it is thin.

Step 4: Spread a layer of compost around 2 to 3 inches thick over the top of your beds. This will act as a nutrient-rich blanket for your soil. You'll know when it's been done right, as you won't be able to see any of the existing ground/cardboard below.

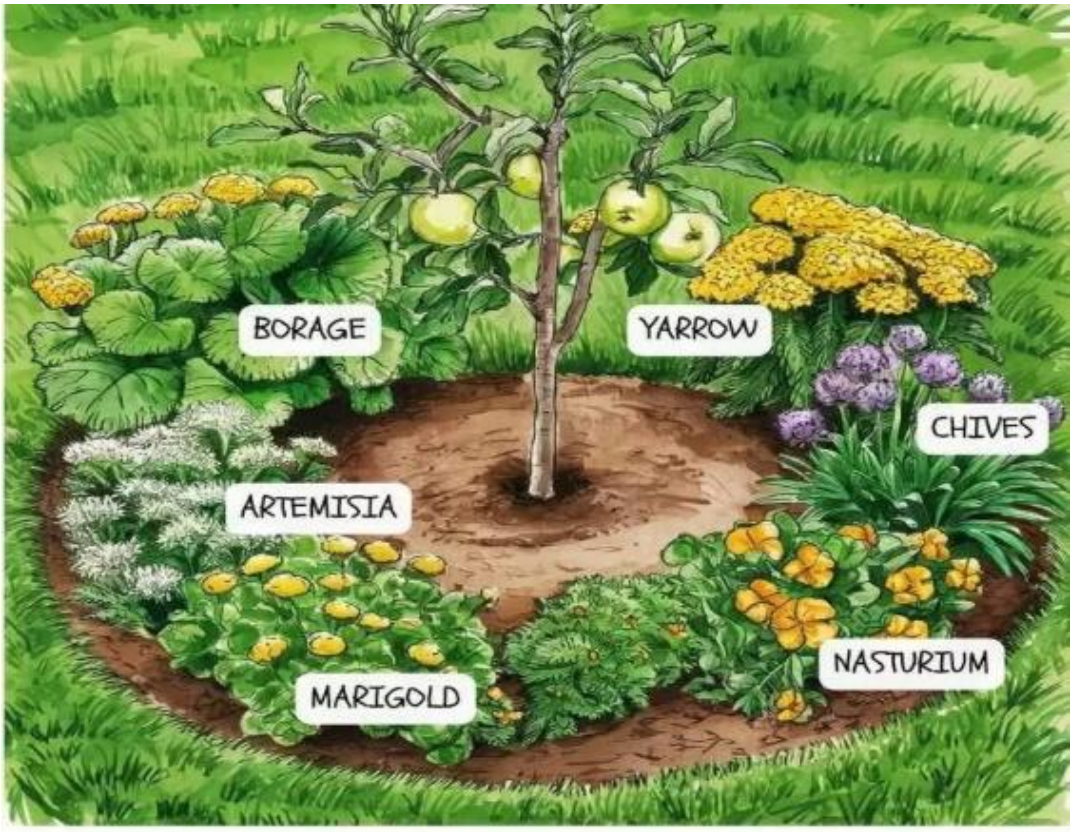
Step 5: Use a wide garden fork or spade to gently work the compost into the top few inches of soil, being careful not to disturb the soil too deeply, as this can damage its structure and disrupt beneficial life within. If your vegetables are already growing, apply a thinner layer around the base of each plant to act as a mulch, helping to retain moisture and prevent weeds without disturbing the plant roots.

Step 6: Water the area to help the compost settle into the soil and to activate its nutrients, making them available for your plants.

Step 5: Pick up the tools and put them away together. This gives volunteers a feeling of completing a job and they will leave satisfied of their contribution during the day.

Orchard and tree care workshops

If you don't have space for an orchard, there may lie space somewhere locally. Cornwall has lost so many orchards over recent years and planting fruit trees with local children and their parents, is a wonderful project. Children will potentially see their trees grow big and strong, take ownership and feel more connected to their home and nature. Local Facebook groups, schools and your council may help find suitable land and you may be able to apply to your council for funding to cover tree cost and hopefully suitable stakes and guards. You could even ask for funding for some companion plants and tools.



There is also a great deal of support out there to know where and what to plant. The Orchard Network, has links to many of our local fruit tree sellers who offer a wealth of knowledge on appropriate varieties.

Resilient Orchards, based in Redruth offer workshops on grafting, apple press hire etc. There are various supporting groups on Facebook, including Cornwall Orchard Network & Orchards Live.

We are also blessed to currently have Forest for Cornwall offering advice, searches, some trees and guards. Though they don't tend to supply the more expensive fruit trees, they may be able to supply trees, such as alder that can help fix nitrogen.

Plants for the Future, another brilliant Cornish organisation have an amazing free recourse available, based on their learnings from the creation of their forest garden, including other suitable nitrogen fixers.

Ideas for sessions include:

- Pruning party. A great mid-winter session to care for your trees.
- Mulching session, adding mulch, woodchip or compost around the base of the trees.
- Companion planting additional trees in your orchard.

Wood chipping, mulching and other uses and benefits of woodchip

You may or may not have a site with spare wood, enough money to buy or hire a chipper but a landowner nearby may well appreciate help clearing dead wood or helping to clear pathways, in return for woodchip.

Landscape gardeners also are often happy to supply wood chip and may also be able to supply young, chipped branches, which are highly nutritious. In the past we scavenged our wood more readily but now people generally tend to buy fuel from Scandinavia. Historically landowners could afford the staff to manage their woodlands but clearing dead wood or trackways are tasks they often don't get around to.

Woodchip is a useful resource for paths, around trees and to rot down in compost to help increase fungal growth. Woodchip adds nutrients and organic matter. It can be hard work but satisfying at the end and building a volunteer team up to help with this and other big, physical jobs, will benefit the farm. Additionally, a green workout benefits us all and can be marketed that way.

See who operates in your area - many gardeners, carpenters and grounds people have surplus waste wood. You may benefit from help in spreading Woodchip correctly where needed and moving it onto paths or mixing it into a compost heap.

Below are some useful resources for your session:

- Safety precautions for using a chipper.
- Finding local woodchip.
- Huw Richards on woodchip and compost uses
- Charles Dowding on 5 uses for woodchip
- Soil Association on using woodchip as a mulch

Ideas for sessions include:

- Moving woodchip from a heap to different areas of the garden where needed
- Spreading out on paths between veg beds

- Spreading around the base of trees to act as a mulch (note if the woodchip is fresh it is best left to rest for a few weeks, otherwise it can actually take nutrients out of the soil)
- Spreading out on paths around the farm
- Adding to compost to increase fungal populations
- Chipping piles of wood together including, fallen trees, wood supplied by contractors locally, or gathering dead wood on site to supply the site with woodchip!

Community Session Ideas

Community sessions can encourage new faces to your growing space or can even take place elsewhere but with support from your organisation.

Locals could learn traditional crafts such as stonewall building, foraging, herbalism, wildlife tracking, bee keeping, tree grafting, wildflower and tree identification and uses, tree care, veg fermenting workshops, preserving, pickle making, wood craft, bushcraft, willow workshop, garland or wreath making.

- Cornwall Rural Education and Skills Trust have ideas and events to join
- Cornwall Heritage Trust also have Stone walling events, other heritage events and community focused ideas. -
- Scything contacts and courses: Scythe Kernow and Skye Grove
- Bushcraft skills and workshops
- Basket weaving
- Beekeeping – finding a local beekeeper or contact your local group through the Cornwall Beekeepers Association or host a bumblebee day and search with information from the Bumblebee Conservation Trust

Can you find a local enthusiast who has good presenting skills and would like to share some of their knowledge in; star gazing, bird watching, moth trapping / identification, tree

planting, grafting and aftercare etc? You might already have an expert involved in your project, or a regular volunteer. Contacts could also be forthcoming through:

- Budding nature
- Cornwall Butterfly Conservation
- Cornwall Wildlife Trust
- Cornwall Astronomy Society and Dark Sky Map
- Forest for Cornwall
- Kernow Conservation CIC
- Cornwall Reptile and Amphibian Group (CRAG)
- RSPB Cornwall
- Cornwall Mammal Group
- Cornwall Birds (CBWBS)
- Cornwall Bat Group
- Amphibian and Reptile Conservation

Johnson-Su Community Compost Guide

This is a great composting activity and involves both the wider community for sourcing materials and then provides a great activity on site to understand how combination and amounts of materials can provide an environment to cultivate soil microbes.

The Johnson-Su Composting method increases soil ecology and resilience. It is a proven method for increasing soil biodiversity, which in turn improves water retention. This enhances the health of plants it is applied to by maintaining high populations of diverse microbes. The composting unit, once constructed, can be reused for future batches. The process involves equal rations of woodchips, animal manures, and organic materials, creating an ideal environment for microbial growth. A simple tube system ensures proper aeration during decomposition, fostering beneficial microorganisms that boost soil biodiversity. The method takes 12 months.

Time required

Once all materials have been collected the activity is best done for a couple of hours with a group. It is recommended to take a whole morning or afternoon to gather and co-create. You could host a “Co-creation composting day” with snacks, music, and volunteers!

Community engagement ideas

- Partner with local farms, landscapers, or tree services for free materials
- Involve as much of community as possible as everyone can add something to the diversity of the compost.

Key Materials

- 1 heat-treated wooden pallet
- Landscape tarp
- 13–14 ft of wire fencing (at least 4 ft tall)
- Rebar tie wire
- 6 x 4-ft perforated septic drain field pipes
- Perforated irrigation hose + garden hose
- Organic biomass: wood chips, leaves, manure, food waste
- 1/3 of each: woodchips, green material, manure.

Step-by step guide

1. Construct the bioreactor base

- Place pallet on a level, shaded area that is fine to leave for 1 year.
- Lay the woven landscape or ground cloth over the pallet. This cloth will help to retain moisture, keep materials in place, and prevent the escape of small materials from the compost unit

2. Assemble the structure and install aeration

- Create wire mesh cylinder and secure with tie wire
- Centre and place cylinder on the base
- Lay drainpipes vertically – get each member of the group to hold 1 or 2 while materials are added to hold in place (next step).
- Coil irrigation hose around inner perimeter – this is useful so you can attach to irrigation.

Tip: Pre-drill holes in the hose if needed to ensure even water distribution.

3. Biomass layering

- Add alternate layers: carbon (wood chips, leaves) and nitrogen (manure, green waste)
- Lightly moisten each layer
- Add a top layer of coarse material

- Finish with a cover of breathable tarp

4. Final touches and monitoring plan

Tasks:

- Water thoroughly using irrigation ring connected to irrigation (ideally automatic) or do manually through year frequently.
- Assign a rotation schedule for monthly checks.

Monitoring plan:

- Check moisture monthly (should feel like a wrung-out sponge)
- Check texture and structure.
- Temperature should be 50-65°C

Important notes for maintenance:

- Compost is ready in 12 months
- No turning needed – just keep it moist and aerated
- Finished compost can be used in gardens, orchards, or to make compost teas by suspending a portion of the finished compost in water for 24-48 hours.

5. Education and outreach

- Host a short compost workshop or garden talk
- Create signs explaining the bioreactor process
- Offer composting advice and even bottled compost tea once compost has been completed.

Educational talking points

- The bioreactor reduces methane by composting aerobically
- Increases soil health and microbial diversity
- At 9-12 months the species diversity and especially the beneficial fungi diversity explodes

Community Bokashi-Making Guide

A hands-on soil-building experience from Asia which regenerates soil in a short time period. Bokashi builds rich, microbe-dense soil and improves plant growth and yields. The Bokashi method recycles waste materials such as manure, husks, and organic material. It supports regenerative agriculture and reduces the need for chemical fertilisers.

Time required

Once materials have been collected this can be created as a group in a couple of hours. Ideal for regular volunteers or 8–10 volunteers working together over 10 days.

Community workshop ideas

- *Soil Life workshop*: Teach about microbes, fermentation, and ecology

- "*Bokashi Kitchen*": Interactive layering activity like a “recipe”
- Bokashi Signs & Art: Let children decorate signs about Bokashi use & benefits

Ingredients list (for 1 full batch)

- Manure (fresh but dry) - 7 sacks (Mixed animal manures are best).
- Clay soil - 4 sacks - Clay holds moisture & minerals well
- Cereal husks - 7 sacks - Or use coffee husk, straw, leaves, wood chips
- Cereal bran - 1 sack - Adds nutrients & microbial food.
- Charcoal - 1 sack - Finer is better; acts like biochar
- Ash and/or rock dust - 25 kg - Use a diverse mix for best results.
- Molasses - 10 L - Microbial food source
- Baker’s yeast - 500 g - Fermentation starter
- Untreated water as needed for mixing ingredients (rainwater preferred).

Tools and materials needed

- Tarp or clean ground space for mixing
- Long-handled forks or shovels
- Sieve for fine ash/mineral sprinkling
- Gloves & masks (for dust)
- Buckets for water/molasses mix
- Thermometer (compost style)
- Shade cover (tarp, shed, etc.)

Step-by-Step: Bokashi Making Process (10 Days)

Day 1: Layer & Mix the Pile

Community Roles: Ingredient carriers, layer builders, mixers, hydration team

- Mix yeast + molasses in a bucket of warm water until fully dissolved.
- Layer the materials in this order (bottom to top):
    - Husk
    - Soil

    - Manure
    - Charcoal
    - Bran
    - Ash/rock dust
    - Molasses + yeast water
- Turn the pile thoroughly with forks until all materials are well blended.
- Water while turning to reach 50% moisture.
- Moisture check: Grab a handful and squeeze. It should feel moist but not drip.
- Cover the pile to protect from rain and sun. Leave overnight.

TIP: It's better to be slightly dry than too wet. If in doubt, wait and adjust next day.

Day 2–4: Fermentation & Heat Phase

Goal: The pile should heat up to ~55°C (131°F)

- Turn 2x daily (morning & evening) to maintain airflow and prevent overheating.
- If it smells like ammonia or has flies: Add more ash or soil.

Day 5–10: Cool Down & Reduction Phase

- Turn once daily.
- Gradually flatten the pile each day — from ~1.2m down to ~20cm.
- On Day 10, the pile should be:
    - Dry to the touch
    - Crumbly texture
    - Greyish in color
    - No strong smell

Storage Tip: You can store the finished Bokashi in bags or containers for up to 2 months, but it's best used fresh.

How to use Bokashi in the garden or farm

Nursery Soil Mix

Vegetables: 1 part Bokashi : 4 parts soil

Trees 2 parts Bokashi : 3 parts soil

Add biochar or native microbes if available.

When transplanting (Dosage per planting hole)

- Leafy greens (lettuce, spinach): 1 handful (100g)
- Brassica crops (cabbage, broccoli): 1.5 handfuls (200g)
- Tomatoes, cucumbers, etc. 2 handfuls (300g)
- Trees: 4–6 kg, covered with soil

NEVER let Bokashi touch roots directly! Always mix and cover with soil.

Repeat Applications (whilst plants are growing)

Vegetables

- 3rd application: 10–12 days after transplanting
- Ongoing: As needed, based on crop observation. Apply around the plant base in new spots each time.

Trees

- 3rd application: Before flowering (in a trench)
- 4th: After harvest, opposite side of tree

Community LAB (Lactic Acid Bacteria) Production Guide

Capture, Culture, and Use Natural Microbes for Healthy Soil, Plants, and More. This activity can be suitable for disabled and elderly volunteers of the community as the stages are simple.

What is LAB?

LAB is short for Lactic Acid Bacteria, a group of powerful microbes that:

- Suppress disease-causing organisms
- Improve soil biology
- Aid in composting and livestock care
- Speeds composting and reduces smell.
- Boosts plant health and yields.
- Inexpensive, scalable, and easy to reproduce

Note: image is a selection of fermentations that include LAB.

Time required

Total time needed is ~7–10 Days. Steps are short and should take less than an hour with a small number of people.

Community workshop ideas

- Microbe Talk with microscopes: Explain the role of good bacteria in soil, health, and compost.
- LAB compare test – with potted plants: spray LAB on half plants in pots then not in other half and see the difference (take notes of how many times you need to water each set also!).
- Bottle Labelling Station: Let kids decorate bottles with dates, usage info, and fun microbe art!

Ingredients and materials needed (for 1 batch)

- White rice - 500 g - Simple, unwashed rice works best
- Untreated water - 2 L - Rainwater, well water, or dechlorinated
- Rice bran - 200 g - Feeds the microbes
- Milk (preferably raw unhomogenized) - 1–2 L - Unpasteurized is best, but any will work.
- Container (open-mouthed) - 3+ Litres - Clean jar or 5 Litre water bottle cut to size.
- Sieve or strainer - For separating rice and bran
- Cloth & string - For covering container to allow airflow but prevent bugs.

Step-by-Step LAB Process

1. Microbe capture (3–5 Days)

Goal: Capture wild microbes from the environment

- In a clean open container, add 500 g of rice + 2 L of water. Stir well.
- Cover with a breathable cloth and tie it securely.
- Place in a dark, cool space for 3–5 days.
- After 3–5 days, check for a sour smell and cloudy water – this means it's ready.

Interesting Fact: Microbes from the air, rice, and water populate the mix — especially Lactobacillus, which love starch and low-oxygen environments!

2. LAB Selection (2–3 Days)

Goal: Create the perfect conditions for Lactobacillus to thrive

- Strain the liquid from the rice.
- Discard the rice (or compost it) and pour the liquid back into the container.
- Add 200 g of rice bran and mix well.

- Cover again with cloth and string.
- Leave in a dark place for 2–3 more days.

What's Happening: The bran feeds the microbes. Only the strongest Lactobacillus strains survive and multiply.

3. LAB Reproduction (2–3 Days)

Goal: Multiply the LAB to make a usable solution

- Strain out the bran and keep the liquid.
- Pour liquid back into the container and add 1–2 L of milk.
- Cover again with cloth and set aside for 2–3 days in a dark place.
- You'll see:
    - Curds (milk solids) on top
    - Creamy yellow liquid below — this is your LAB!
- Scoop off and discard the curds (compost them),and bottle the yellow liquid.

Storage Tip: Store the LAB liquid in a cool, dark place. It can last several months when kept sealed.

How to Use LAB in a variety of situations

Purpose/Dilution

- Spray on soil or plants - 1–10 ml per 1L of water (Apply early morning or evening)
- Compost or Bokashi booster - 10 ml per liter of water (Speeds up decomposition)
- Livestock water additive - 3% of total water volume - Aids digestion & reduces odour.
- Odor control (toilets, stables) - 1:100 - Spray regularly
- Greywater treatment - 1:100 - Reduces smells & sludge
- General cleaning - 1:50 - Natural, non-toxic cleaner

IMPORTANT: Use diluted LAB within 24 hours of mixing with water!

Community Seed Coating Guide

This method provides a natural seed boosting coat for stronger, healthier plants. It will:

- Boost germination by giving seeds a headstart in nutrient uptake.
- Prevent seed-bourne disease as the molasses and minerals support healthy microbes that outcompete pathogens.
- Feed the soil, as the coating breaks down it will enrich the surrounding soil.
- Protect seeds from birds by making the coating less shiny and appealing.

This activity is accessible so great for anyone with disabilities, children, elderly and anyone else who could be interested. It can be done seated at a table.

Time requirement

Can take 30 minutes or all day depending on the pace you would like to work and how many seeds you have.

Community engagement ideas

- *Child-friendly stations* with labelled jars: "Seed Booster," "Mineral Magic," etc.
- Jobs for volunteers or groups at the start of a busy sowing period

What you'll need (Ingredients and materials)

- Seeds: Your choice – veggies, wildflowers, cover crops, etc.
- Molasses: A sticky energy source for microbes and minerals
- Mycorrhiza spores: beneficial fungi to improve plant health.
- Minerals (rock dust, ashes, phosphites, etc.), this feeds the seeds and soil
- Untreated water: Rainwater, filtered, or Spring water
- Open container: To mix everything
- Sieve or strainer: To dust minerals evenly
- Gloves (optional) to keep clean if working with ashes and molasses.

Step-by-Step instructions

1. Set up a mixing station

Create a clean, flat workspace for your community members — great for a table under a tent or in a classroom.

- Divide into small groups if working with different types of seeds, or work on one type at a time.
- Each group gets their own bowl and set of ingredients.

2. Make the molasses mix

- Add a small amount of molasses to your container (just enough to coat the seeds).
- Add a splash of water and stir until it's slightly runny, like syrup.

Community Teaching Moment: Talk about how molasses feeds beneficial soil microbes and acts as a glue for minerals!

3. Coat the seeds

- Add your seeds to the molasses mix.
- Stir well so that all seeds are evenly coated and sticky.

Team Tip: Have a rotation where one mixes, one observes stickiness, and one prepares the minerals.

4. Add minerals

- Using the sieve, sprinkle a mix of Mycorrhiza spores and minerals over the sticky seeds while gently mixing.
- You want them coated — not clumped!

Interesting Fact: Explain how rock dust provides slow-release nutrients and ashes add potassium. Diversity = better soil biology and stronger plants.

5. Dry or plant

- Option 1: Plant them right away while they’re slightly sticky.
- Option 2: Spread them out to dry (on cardboard or trays), then store in breathable bags or jars.

Growing Oyster Mushrooms Outdoors on Straw beds

Time requirements

Overnight prep, then the bed could be made in a couple of hours with a small group. The results will take 6 weeks and need basic maintenance.

Location choice

- Shade is essential – under trees, shade cloths, or north-facing walls are perfect.
- Keep the growing area moist and humid, especially during colonisation and fruiting.
- Avoid direct sun and wind – they dry out the mycelium.
- Watch for pests like slugs; use organic, natural deterrents if needed.

Community engagement ideas

- Host a mushroom cooking day when you harvest your first flush
- Document the growing journey and share online to inspire others
- Have discussions on the topic with great mushroom authors Paul Stamets & Merlin Sheldrake being inspiration.
- Grow networks just like the fungi do, teach youth or volunteer community about fungi.

Materials needed

- Straw
- Large bucket or barrel
- Builders' lime or quicklime (to sterilize straw).
- Oyster mushroom spawn (grain spawn is best for this)
- Clean water
- Optional: Shade cloth
- Cardboard to line bed and more to cover

Step-by-step instructions

1. Soak & pasteurise straw

- Cut straw into small pieces (2–4 inches).
- Soak in cold water with builders' lime (pH ~12) overnight.
- Drain for 1–2 hours to remove excess water – using a grid on top of a wheelbarrow orks fine.

2. Layer straw and spawn

- In a suitable outdoor garden bed put a layer of cardboard covering area you want to be inoculated.
- Then in bed, **layer Pasteurized straw → spawn → straw** so it is mixed
- Use 10–15% spawn by weight.

3. Cover and incubate

- Then cover the Pasteurized straw and spore mix with another layer of cardboard.
- Another layer of straw can be put on top, or rocks to hold cardboard down.
- Allow 10–14 days for full colonisation (white mycelium should cover straw).

4. Cut air holes and wait

- Mist daily to keep humidity high (do not soak).
- Mushrooms should appear in 6 weeks.

5. Harvest

- Pick when caps are fully formed and edges slightly rolled.
- You can get 2–3 flushes from the same straw bed.