

Guide to Volunteer Organizations Self-Led: Seeding & Ragweed Control Workday

Your responsibilities

- Check Eventbrite Calendar
- Submit [form](#) to parksvolunteer@austintexas.gov 30 days prior to event
- Conduct site visit with Watershed Protection Department and/or Park Manager
- Estimate volunteer needs (2 units minimum suggested in 2-hour shifts; 1 unit = 2 hours with 15 volunteers)
- Post volunteer opportunities and registration
- Coordinate information/training tasks
- Confirm attendance prior to event
- Gather liability waiver signatures
- Give safety orientation
- Provide work gloves, tools, kits
- Cleanup

Profile, age range-Seed balls and seeding appropriate for 5+ years old, ragweed bending for 10+ year old.

Clothes and safety-Closed toed shoes, adequate drinking water, sun protection, poison ivy protection

Tools/Supplies: poison ivy block, gloves, rakes, seed mixes, clay, compost, seed ball kit-trays, spray bottles, measuring cups

Background

Plants help improve water quality and anchor soil. While soil is the foundation for plants, without plant roots to stabilize the soil, bare soil washes into our creeks whenever it rains. Seeding is accomplished by hand spreading seed or applying seed balls to riparian areas. Seed germination rates improve when there is good seed to soil contact so attention should be given to mixing seeds into soil.

Seed balls are marble sized mixtures of compost, clay, native seeds, and water. They are a cost effective, low maintenance method of re-vegetation which requires little water. Seed balls are scattered directly onto ground and not planted.

[Ragweed](#) is a native plant that may be perceived as undesirable on stream banks. It has some benefits such as reducing the effects of direct sunlight on the soil and it likely reduces soil compaction while increasing soil moisture and organic matter. However, when ragweed growth is very dense it may slow down the establishment of other desirable species. In these cases ragweed stems can be bent at the beginning of their flowering stage in the fall. This technique gives other native plants a better chance of growing while maintaining the benefits that ragweed provides to the soil.

Techniques:

Ragweed control

- Positively identify ragweed
- Bend stems at the base (do not pull roots out)



- Stomp on bent plants to flatten

Seed balls

- Thoroughly mix dry clay (3 parts), compost (2 parts), and seed mix (1 part) specific for the light/moisture conditions of the site.
- Sprinkle with water until mixture sticks/binds together like cookie dough.
- Take a pinch of the finished mixture and roll (in the palm of your hand) into meatball-sized round balls
- 'throw' or spread the seed balls within the Grow Zone or add them by coir logs.



Seeding

Seeding is done after removal of invasive plants where bare soil is exposed (refer to Johnson grass, Bamboo, Giant cane removal)

- Rake the ground to loosen the soil.
- Spread seeds over the soil at the rate of a handful every 5 ft.
- Press the seeds in to the ground.

Provided by Watershed Protection Department

Assist with initial site visit to help determine area extent, scope, and potential follow-ups of the project.