

Connecting Kids to Nature

Nature is a great teacher and getting kids outside to learn and play is good for their brains and their bodies. Try this outdoor activity from Project Learning Tree® - it's safe, fun, and educational!

Have Seeds, Will Travel

Most plants reproduce using systems that include flowers and seeds. In this outdoor investigation, children observe, collect, and classify plant seeds.

Gather a collection of seeds from a wooded area. Try using one or more of the following methods:

- Drag an old blanket or fuzzy cloth behind you on the ground.
- Place a large, old, wool sock over hands or shoes to see what you can pick up.
- Wear bracelets made of masking tape (sticky side out), to hold the seeds you find.

Have children examine their seed collections and invent a system for sorting or classifying them. Explain that plants have developed many different methods of seed dispersal, to ensure the success of their species. Some seeds need the help of other external variables to disperse.

3 Methods of Seed Dispersal



Fill in the vowel blanks (a, e, i, o, u, and sometimes y) below to decipher the seed examples:

__C__RN

S__M__R__

CR__NB__RR__

These three examples represent only a few of the many ways that seeds can be dispersed. Conduct your own research to explore more -OR- consider challenging children to design their own seeds, complete with specialized dispersal mechanisms. To make a functioning model, try using a dried lima bean with different art materials (feathers, toothpicks, cardboard, cotton balls, string, rubber bands, etc.) to design a new type of seed. What dispersal method will it use?

Explore and Review:

- How do a seed's shape and size affect its dispersal?
- Why is it important for seeds to be dispersed in different ways?
- What are three mechanisms of seed dispersal?
- Can some seeds travel farther than others?

Make Learning Fun!

Encourage your child's school to incorporate learning outdoors.

For more activity ideas and materials:

- Attend a PLT workshop, www.plt.org/state-network/
- Visit shop.plt.org



Project Learning Tree®
(PLT) is an initiative
of the Sustainable
Forestry Initiative.

www.plt.org