



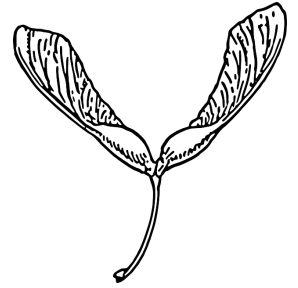
Nature Activities: Week 4, Plants

Seed Collection and Dispersal Methods

Activities adapted from Project Learning Tree

Seed Collection and Sorting

Everyone will scavenge for seeds for 5-10 minutes. People can use various methods to collect the seeds. Some can put socks over their shoes and collect seeds by walking through grassy or shrubby areas, some can hand gather seeds and put them in a small cup, and others can wear a tape bracelet (wrap tape around each kid's wrist with the sticky side facing outwards, stick seeds to tape).



Once people gather enough seeds, head back inside to sort the seeds. As a group, create any system for sorting the seeds. Lead an age appropriate conversation about what seeds are, what they need, and the various methods of seed dispersal. Seeds contain a small plant, a supply of food, and a protective covering. They come from the ovary of the plant that is located in the flower or cone. Every seed needs sun, air, water, and nutrients from the soil. There are many different kinds of seeds that are each designed for its parent plant's particular habitat. Seeds must effectively disperse, or spread, throughout the world.

Design your own seed

Seeds disperse in their environment via wind, water, and animals. Each plant is served better by different dispersal methods and each habitat has plants that disperse their seeds via each method. Seed shapes and sizes alter the way in which a seed moves and interacts with the environment. Certain shapes and sizes are better suited to be moved by wind, water, or animals. Look back at the collected seeds to see if you can identify how each seed was built to travel.



Using materials around the house (popsicle sticks, toothpicks, cardboard, egg cartons, cotton balls, string, rubber bands, Velcro, tape, paper, etc.), create a seed that can be dispersed by wind (floats), water (floats), or animals (sticks to a animal or human). If participants struggle to find enough materials at home, they can also draw a seed. Ask each person to present their ideas while others listen. Then, test each seed and its dispersal method. If people want, they can adjust their design and try again.

Questions? Contact Kim Kogler at kimberly@okanogancd.org

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Resources for outdoor learning and exploration

Nature Activities: Week 4, Nature Awareness

Meet a Tree

A lesson from Joseph Cornell's *Sharing Nature with Children*

Two people will work together for this activity, ideally in a forested area. One person will be blindfolded, meeting a tree, while the other person guides the process. First, the guide leads their partner across the landscape to any tree that attracts them. Then, they will help their partner explore the tree. Start with independent exploring and then provide specific suggestions. For example, instead of suggesting they feel the tree, ask them to rub their cheek on the bark. Ask questions like, is your tree alive? Can you put your arms around it? Can you find plants growing on it? When the person blindfolded gathers all they information they can, the guide leads them back to where they began via an indirect route. Remove the blindfold and let the person try to find their tree with their eyes open. What was a landscape with many trees becomes a collection of very individual and unique trees! Once complete, switch roles.

Recipe for a Forest

A lesson from Joseph Cornell's *Sharing Nature with Children*

Each person will need a blank piece of paper and drawing and coloring utensils. Everyone receives an imaginary deed to one square mile of land. On this empty plot, a person can create their own dream forest, complete with any trees, animals, mountains, and rivers they desire. Encourage creativity—waterfalls, windstorms, perpetual rainbows, walking trees! Have them first list the ingredients of their forest, then have them draw a picture of it.

Discuss whether their forests are able to maintain themselves and other life year after year. Have they included each part of the food cycle like herbivores (plant-eaters), producers (plants), and decomposers? What about soil, water, and the sun? Let them add as your discussion progresses.

More resources:

Cornell, Joseph (1989) *Sharing Nature with Children II*. DAWN Publications.

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