

activity 10

Seed dispersal



Age 8-12



Time

Activity - 30 minutes

Materials

Seed suggestions: *Dandelion*, *Cleaver*, *Sunflower*.

Whole *Apples* and/or *Blackberries* (optional).

Electron micrographs of the seed selection.

Teacher worksheet 4.

Pupil worksheet 11.

Through these activities children can learn:

- that there are variations in seed shapes
- that these variations are important because they help the seed to reach a suitable habitat and to colonise new areas, free of competition from their own species.

Skills developed:

- observation
- classification
- discussion
- interpretation

How to begin:

- Explain that dispersal ensures that a seed moves away from its 'parent' plant so that it has room to grow. Try, during discussion, to introduce a country-to-country scale, as well as a local scale.
- Ask the children to predict different ways in which they think a seed might move away from its 'parent' plant to another place (Q1).
- Look at the seeds and the corresponding electron micrographs. Use a binocular microscope if available, or hand-held magnifiers. Ensure the examining area is well lit.
- Talk about the samples and the photographs. Encourage the children to identify possible methods of dispersal (Q2).
- Initiate a classification exercise. You may wish to use Teacher worksheet 4 and Pupil worksheet 11.

Key questions:

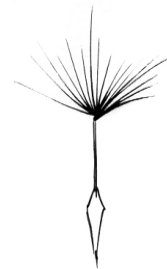
Q1. Can you think of ways in which a seed can move around?

Q2. What kinds of dispersal method do you think these seeds use?

Extension activities:

Extension activities may be achieved through any of the questions below:

- Which fabric is best for collecting hooked seeds? Devise a fair test.
- Is it true that all large plants grow from large seeds? Devise a fair test to prove or disprove your ideas.
- Do all fruits contain the same number of seeds? Examine a range of fruits to try and find out the answer. You may wish to encourage the children to use biological reference books.



Dandelion
Seed



Sycamore
Seed