

Seed Dispersal

Third Grade Science Curriculum

Objective:

Students will gain a firm understanding of the six different mechanisms seeds are dispersed in nature

Materials:

7 – ½ dozen egg cartons

100 or so acorns

Procedure:

10 minute Intro

Prompt students on the six different ways seeds are dispersed in nature. Ask students to give one example of each mechanism. Show some examples of seeds and elicit answers on how each one is dispersed.

1. Wind - windsurfers
2. Water - floaters
3. Animals – edibles
4. Animals – hitch hikers
5. Gravity - droppers
6. Explosion – exploders!

10 minute Squirrel activity

Tell students that they should pretend to be squirrels. What are squirrels' favorite food? What do they do when acorns fall before the winter comes?

Give each student 4-5 acorns and ask them to hide them like squirrels do. They should hide each acorn in a separate location really well so the others can't find them.

10 minute Scavenger hunt

Students get into groups of 3's and each group gets a ½ dozen egg carton. The task is to look for six different seeds in the garden that represent the six different mechanisms of seed dispersal. Each example they will put in one of the compartments of the egg carton.

*Note: some seeds have more than one mechanism of seed dispersal.

10 min Regroup

Students will discuss the different seeds they collected and explain which type of dispersal each one uses.

5 minute Squirrel Activity Conclusion

Tell students to be squirrels again. The squirrels are hungry and want to eat some of the acorns they hid. Give them three minutes to find all the acorns. As time starts to run out, tell them that winter is approaching and the snow is falling so they have to be quick or they will not be able to find their acorns.

When time is up, have them come together and report how many acorns they were able to find.

Did they find them all? Did they forget where they hid some of them? What will happen to the acorns the squirrels can't find? How do squirrels help oak trees survive?