

Field Ecology

Seeds For Art's Sake

Post-visit activity, grades K-3

Adapted from California State Environmental Education Guide

Objective

Students will create pictures using a variety of seeds and describe the ways a seed might travel.

Materials

- Several different types of seeds, nuts, and beans (include flying, floating, sticky, and edible seeds-see seed list for ideas)
- Yarn
- Glue
- Cardboard or posterboard
- Markers or crayons

Background

Most plants produce seeds to reproduce. If conditions are right (enough sunlight, water, good soil, space, and air) germination and new growth will occur and a new plant will be produced. New plants need minerals, air, water, space, and sunlight to survive. Seeds that are dropped from the parent plant in a place where there is not enough sunlight or nutrients may have difficulty growing.

Many plants have seeds that are adapted for dispersal away from the parent plant. These seeds may have hooks or barbs, a fleshy coating attractive to animals, or "wings" which allow it to float on water or fly with the wind. Seeds

eaten by animals are later "planted" in a new location through the animal's droppings.

Procedure

Set out the different types of seeds in containers so the students can observe the various sizes and shapes. Discuss how each might travel away from the parent plant.

Use the colors, sizes, and shapes of the seeds, and have the students create a picture. The picture should tell a story of how the seeds travel. For example, if they used winged seeds the picture might be an airplane or a bird. If they chose "sticky or prickly" seeds the picture might be of an animal like a rabbit or a bear.

Seed List

Flying seeds: helicopters (maple and ash samaras), dandelions, milkweed

Floating seeds: coconuts, cranberries, Russian Olive, cattail

Sticky seeds: burdock, wild licorice, houndstongue

Edible seeds: berries, cherries, pine nuts, apple, sumac berries