

Fruits and seeds and how they are dispersed . . . some ideas to explore for KS2

This is an exercise which I have used successfully with Year 2, 3 and 4 pupils to help them link special characteristics of fruits and seeds with the way in which they are dispersed.

It is essential right at the beginning of the exercise to stress that fruits which birds and other animals enjoy eating may be very poisonous to humans. Nothing must be eaten without the permission of the adult in charge.

The Field Studies Council (FSC) Folding Card 'A guide to fruits and seed dispersal' can be used to help with identification. An example of photocopyable drawings and a suggested questionnaire are given here.

Divide the pupils into small groups. Collect common local fruits, with a different one for each group and preferably each with a different dispersal mechanism. Spread out the fruits on chairs or stools in the garden or classrooms. Give each group a drawing of one of the fruits and ask the pupils to match the drawing with the correct fruit. Let the group examine the fruit carefully and, with help, fill in the questionnaire over the page. Each group tries to decide how the fruit or seed might be spread around.

Ask each group to explain how they think their fruit is dispersed, picking out important features - for example, the wind dispersed fruits are very tiny or have wings or parachutes. Let each group of pupils choose a name relevant to the dispersal mechanism of their fruit (e.g. the pepperpots), and which helps them remember the important features.

During a short walk in local fields and woods the pupils can look for more fruits and seeds. For each fruit or seed they find let them look at its characteristics, then with help from the teacher they can decide which dispersal group it should belong to.

Turn over to page 2 to see a picture of a fruit. You can use this as an example to get your pupils started. Then page 3 is photocopyable and gives a set of questions for your pupils to answer when looking at their fruits and seeds.

***Dr Anne Bebbington
Field Studies Council, Juniper Hall***

The FSC Folding card - A Guide to Fruits and Seed Dispersal

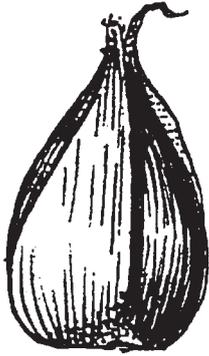
The FSC Folding card has been written primarily to help teachers and pupils identify seeds and fruits and put them into groups according to their dispersal mechanism. In the FSC card, the main dispersal groups are identified and examples of seeds and fruits showing the special features of each group are illustrated and described.

Space does not allow all common fruits to be included but those chosen illustrate different features and should be relatively easy to find throughout Britain.

Additional information about seeds and seed germination and some teaching exercises will be available on the SAPS website (after November 2002). You will find worksheets that you can download and ideas to link to experiments investigating seeds and seed germination. All the illustrations on the fruits and seeds folding card will be on the SAPS website and these can easily be made into more worksheets that you can use with your pupils.

SAPS is pleased to have this opportunity to link with FSC in the presentation of this material.

BEECH



Artwork © Anne Bebbington

Look carefully at your fruit and see if you can answer the questions opposite.

Look at your fruit carefully and answer the following questions.

Do the fruits or seeds have hooks?

If you can't see them, do a bit of detective work - see if they cling to your jumper.

Do the fruits or seeds have a parachute of hairs?

Do the fruits or seeds have wings?

What colour is the fruit?

Is the fruit shiny?

Is the fruit or seed juicy?

Squeeze it to find out. Don't try and eat it - it may be poisonous.

How do you think the seeds of your plant are spread around?