



Nature Cat's Soaring Seeds

He's a daring, brave, adventurous backyard nature explorer extraordinaire! (Well, maybe not so brave!) Nature Cat can't wait to get outside for a day of backyard nature excursions and bravery! But there's one problem: he's still a house cat with no real instincts for nature. That doesn't stop this passionate and curious feline, who loves learning and experiencing all he can about nature! Today he would like to find all of the different ways that seeds travel!

What you'll need:

- 3 Sets of Bumpers
- Velcro Strips
- Ping Pong Balls
- Tongue Depressors
- Recording Page



The Activity:

- Explain to students the various ways in which seeds are dispersed in nature.
 - Before they can grow into new plants, seeds need to leave the seed pod. If all the seeds a plant produced landed just underneath the parent plant, they would be too crowded, and the established large plant might not leave them enough light or water for them all to develop properly. When you plant seeds too thickly in a pot, you can see that they grow tall and leggy, and each plant is weak and spindly. The various methods of seed dispersal are designed to ensure that as many seeds as possible have a good chance of growing up to produce seeds of their own.
 - Sometimes, the pod or fruit containing the seeds is carried away from the parent plant; sometimes, individual seeds are spread to a new location. The size and shape of the seedpod or the seeds influences how they are dispersed. The main methods plants use to disperse their seeds to places with better growing conditions than directly under the parent plant include gravity, animals, force, wind and water. Often, a plant will spread its seeds by a combination of these methods. For instance, a fruit falling to the ground by gravity might then be carried away by animals, or a seed blown by the wind might land in water and be transported somewhere else before germinating.
 - On some plants native to California, Australia and South Africa, the seedpods may need the heat of the natural bush fires occurring in these areas to open and release their seeds, which are then dispersed by other means.
RETRIEVED FROM: <http://theseedsite.co.uk/dispersal.html>

Discuss how seeds scientists believed that the large Sequoyah trees in California were thought to be going extinct until wildfires caused the seeds to activate and new trees began to grow.

Allow children to discuss how animals might spread the seeds.

- Instruct parents to wear the bumpers.
- Tell students that they will be the wind and throw the ping pong balls at their parents. (Not all seeds are supposed to attach to the bumper.)
- Have students write the names of the seeds that fell to the ground on the tongue depressors and stick into the ground.
- Children will then record their garden on the recording sheet.
- Allow the children and parents to discuss what they have learned about the dispersal of seeds.



Seed Dispersal Garden

