

# Seed Travels

THIRD GRADE

We all know pollinators are important for plant reproduction, but plants reproduce another important way. For instance, have you ever seen a plant in a garden that just seemingly pops up out of nowhere? We typically call this a “volunteer.” Weeds are the most common type of volunteer. But how did it get there if no one planted it? This activity will explore how seeds move from one place to another, and students will make their own seed balls.

## SUBJECT

SCIENCE

## TIME

45 MIN - 1 HR

## MATERIALS

Mixed seeds, 1 bag

Hand fans, 4

Pieces of velcro, 4

Blank paper, 8 sheets

Seed balls, a few

Seed Ball Clay, 1 cup

Compost, 1 cup

Wildflower seed mix, 1  
Tbsp

Cayenne pepper, 1  
Tbsp

Water, about  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup

Nursery trays lined  
with newspaper

Measuring cup

Measuring spoon

Bucket

Trowel

## DIRECTIONS

- Ask, have you ever seen a plant that seemed to pop up out of nowhere? What kind of plant? If someone didn't plant it, how did it get there?
- Explain that students will demonstrate how seeds are dispersed or spread to new locations by mimicking the wind, the fur of animals, and animal scat. Ask students if they've ever been on a hike and came home with seeds stuck to their socks? This is one way that seeds disperse - they have characteristics that grab onto things, like socks and animal fur. Another way seeds disperse is by being carried by the wind. These seeds have a “fuzz” that helps them get picked up by the wind. And yet another way seeds disperse is when animals eat them and then poop them out.
- Divide students into groups of 3 and hand out a blank piece of paper to each group. This is best done with students at a table, otherwise sitting on the ground with clipboards to create a flat and level surface.
- Pass out hand fans to four groups and a piece of velcro to 4 groups. Ask students which type of seed dispersal method goes with which tool? The hand fan mimics the wind and the velcro mimics fur.
- Have students take a pinch of seeds from the mixed seeds bag and place them on the paper. Give students a few minutes to demonstrate seed dispersal with their tools. Did some seeds disperse better than others? Why?
- Have groups switch tools and then distribute another pinch of seeds to repeat the activity with the new tool.
- After students explore each station, pass around the seed balls and ask students which dispersal method it mimics. (animal scat).
- Then make the recipe on the next page for the whole class and have students roll their own wildflower seed balls.

## SOURCE

- BCK Programs



# Seed Ball Recipe

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup Seed Bomb Clay
- 1-2 cups sifted compost (start with 1 cup and add more as needed)
- 1 Tbsp cayenne pepper powder (to deter pests)
- 1 Tbsp wildflower seed mix
- ½-1 cup water (start with ½ cup and add more as needed)

## YIELD

- This recipe yields 25-30 teaspoon-sized seed balls.

## DIRECTIONS

- Add seed bomb clay, compost, cayenne, wildflower seed mix, and water to a bucket and mix together with a trowel. If the mix is too dry, add a bit more water, the consistency should be workable enough to combine but not too wet.
- Distribute small portions of the mixture to each student, about 1 teaspoon each.
- Instruct students to roll their portion into a ball.
- Place rolled seed balls on the newspaper-lined tray to dry.
- When thoroughly dried (1-3 days), students can take their seed balls home to plant in their yard, or you can plant them around the school garden.

