

Seed Collecting

This activity is all about collecting and naming seeds found in the garden.



A plant produces seed that will germinate, grow and develop into another plant similar to itself. In the autumn many plants are getting ready for winter, some lose their leaves and 'go to sleep'. Others will die and only their seeds remain to grow in the following year. This is the time to walk around the garden, park or countryside and look for seeds that can be collected, named and grown next year. The seeds that plants produce vary in size, shape, colour and quantity. Some are very small and look like dust, others are the size of sugar grains and dark in colour, some are quite big and easy to see. Try to gather seeds from flowers, shrubs and trees.

What do we need to start?

- Notebook
- Pen or pencil
- Sticky tape
- Scissors
- Envelopes

1. When the flower of a plant fades and starts to dry-out, the seeds that it has produced will eventually be scattered by the wind, birds and animals. Some plants produce fruit which surrounds the seed. When the fruit is ripe it falls to the ground or is eaten and will start to grow in the following year if conditions are right. Other plants, such as cabbage, swede, onion and beetroot only produce seeds in the second year of their growth cycle (biennial).
2. The seeds of a plant can be found in capsules at the end of the flower stem or in the form of a cushion that was once surrounded by the flower's petals (corolla). With cereals and grasses the seed is in the form of a spike at the end of the stem. On an envelope write the name of the seed and put it inside. It is generally easier to identify the plant from which the seed was taken when making a collection.
3. When you have identified and collected a number of different seeds, take them inside the house to 'dry-out' naturally on a sheet of clean, white paper. Make sure you label the sheets of paper and don't mix the seed samples.
4. Once the seed has naturally dried, sprinkle some of them onto a piece of sticky tape approximately 6cm long. Attach each piece of sticky tape to a plain sheet of paper in columns and label each one for future reference.
6. Next spring, you can sow some of your seed and grow them into new plants.

