

Growing Plants

Today we will be...

Finding out why and how seeds are dispersed.

Which of these are fruits?

plum



banana



acorn

pear



maize



watermelon

wheat



maple pods





All of these parts of the plant are technically the fruits of the plant because they are all the part of the plant that carries the seed. However, we tend to think of fruits as being the fleshy fruits that we eat, such as the plum, banana and watermelon.



Where are the seeds in each of these fruits? How many seeds do you think each one has?

It is quite rare for a fruit to have just one seed. Why do you think some fruits have lots of seeds inside them?



Fruits have a lot of seeds because it increases the chances of more plants growing. Fruits rarely stay with the plant they grew on. The seeds are **dispersed** to different places. Dispersed means spread out. There are lots of ways the seeds can be dispersed:



Very light seeds, like these dandelion seeds, can be dispersed by the wind. They float to different places where some will grow into new dandelions. Not all the seeds will grow into new plants as they might not land in a suitable place to grow.

Some seeds are dispersed by animals. Animals like foxes, birds and fruit bats eat fruits straight from the plant or fruits that have fallen to the ground. Some seeds are digested by the animal but some are not digested and come out the other end as whole seeds. Some seeds are buried by animals like squirrels.



Some seeds are too large or heavy to be dispersed by wind or animals. The coconut is a good example of this. Coconut trees often use water to disperse their seeds. Coconuts that grow near water will often get washed up onto other islands or different parts of the coast where they grow into new plants.



Other plants use more explosive methods to disperse their seeds! Some plants, such as pea pods and gorse bushes, produce seed pods. The seeds dry inside the pods. When they are ready, the pods explode and throw the seeds out away from the plant.



Why don't all seeds
grow into new plants?

Think, pair, share

