SEEDS of LIFE

GEORGIAN BAY BIOSPHERE MNIDOO GAMII

Seeds are the start of most plant life. They are designed to grow in different conditions, each plant's seed is adapted to its needs. Plants are rooted in one spot, but seeds are travelers and have a better chance of survival when spread. Can you guess these seed types by how they're spread?

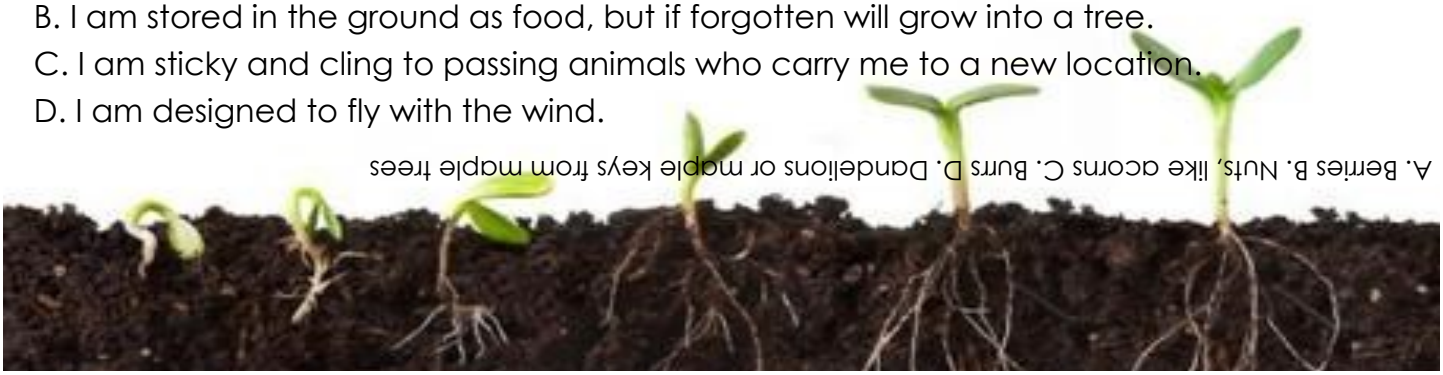
A. I am eaten by birds and other animals, but will grow into a plant after digestion.

B. I am stored in the ground as food, but if forgotten will grow into a tree.

C. I am sticky and cling to passing animals who carry me to a new location.

D. I am designed to fly with the wind.

A. Berries B. Nuts, like acorns C. Burrs D. Dandelions or maple keys from maple trees



1. Starting Seeds with a Terrarium

Terrariums are wonderful mini-environments which recycle water and need little attention. Any clear watertight container can be made into a terrarium.

Materials: 1 Two-litre pop bottle, soil, small stones, seeds from trees or flowers, water, scissors

1. Ask an adult to cut off the top of the pop bottle then fill the bottom 3 cm with stones. Stones allow water to drain so the roots don't get too wet.
2. Add 7 cm of soil on top of the stones. For no weeds use potting soil, or for weed surprises use garden soil.
3. Use your finger to make holes as deep as your finger nail in the centre of the terrarium and plant 1-2 seeds in each, covering lightly with soil.
4. Gently add a small cup of water.
5. Features such as moss or twigs can also be added.
6. Put the top back on the bottle with the cap still on. It should fit over the rim or just inside the rim of the bottle.
7. Watch your terrarium to ensure it is moist enough and keep it in a warm, sunny location.
8. Record what happens! *How tall does it become? How often do you water it? What species might it be? How is it like the environment outside?*
9. The plant may grow too big for the terrarium. If so, dig a small hole in a safe spot outside to transplant it.

2. Seed Collection

Early scientists used collections for research. Some collections were HUGE, with thousands of *specimens*. Today we know large collections do more harm than good. But small collections which are returned to nature do not have the same impact. If you want to practice being a scientist or just have fun outside, a seed collection is perfect!

Materials: at least one egg carton, magnifying glass

These seeds are common around Georgian Bay. See how many you can find! Use an empty egg carton to hold your specimens and a magnifying glass to have a closer look at each. What do you notice about these seeds? What do they remind you of?

Pine Cone

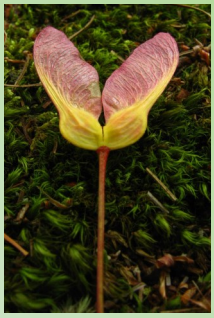
Cattails (marshy areas)

Blackberries

Acorn

Jewelweed (seed pods that burst!)

Burrs (check your clothes)



Maple Key

Milkweed Pod

3. Spore Prints

There is a common sight growing in dark, wet places: mushrooms! Mushrooms are not plants, they are types of *fungi* and they produce *spores*! Spores develop into fungi, just like seeds develop into plants. Spores also make art!

You can use a mushroom from the store or one you find outside. You get the best prints from mushrooms with a large cap.

1. Remove the stem, and place the mushroom gill side down on white and/or dark paper. Different coloured papers will show different coloured spores.
2. Simply leave it overnight and by morning you've made a spore print! Each of the tiny flecks on the paper is an individual spore, with the power to become an individual fungi!
3. You can fasten the spores in place with hairspray, or release them outside (while facing away from the wind).