

THE HIDDEN BEAUTY OF

SEEDS & FRUITS

SEED AND FRUIT FEATURES

Many seeds are hidden in fruits or pods that are colourful, fleshy and even tasty.

Write down two ways that colour might help a fruit?

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2.
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Why would being delicious help a plant disperse its seeds?

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In what other way could being surrounded by a rich flesh help the seed?

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Have a look around the exhibition. Despite many seeds starting in colourful fruits, pods or flowers, most seeds are shades of white through brown to black.

How could this colouring help the seed?

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Many seeds, pods and fruits are not ripe and ready to be dispersed until they have dried. This is because the drying process changes the form and structure of a ripened seed/fruit in ways that will help it be dispersed:

Moisture evaporating from a seed can cause parts to get thinner and more ridged,

Parts also become lighter and can even develop air pockets,

Some parts may become tough and very hard,

Some structures dry unevenly and this can cause curling which can create interesting shapes and even tension which can make things burst.

In each box draw a seed and label the features that will help it disperse in the way stated:

Wind dispersal (anemochory):

Explosion dispersal (ballochory):

Water dispersal (hydrochory):

Animal dispersal (zoochory):

Some seeds use features like hooks, barbs and burrs to catch hold of animal fur, feet or feathers to help them disperse away from their parent plant. This is call epizoochory. These features make for some dramatic seeds, some of which have even been likened to weapons. Which seed in the exhibition has your favourite example of epizoochorchy?

Write the name and draw a picture of it in the box below:

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Many seeds have physical features similar to birds and insects in order to help them disperse by anemochory – on the wind, like wings or feather like structures. Which wind dispersed seed in the exhibition is your favourite?

Write the name and draw a picture of it in the box below:

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Botany begins at home with your local plants but curiosity can take you far afield. The English botanical artist Marianne North, 1830-1890, travelled extensively around the world.

If you were a botanist where would you go to study plants and why?

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