

Trees from seeds

If you look closely in autumn, you will spot seeds on trees, shrubs and small plants. Follow the life of a seed with your group to discover how difficult it is to grow into a fully-grown plant. You could then try your hand at collecting seeds and planting them to grow more trees for your school grounds.



1. Try to collect seeds in autumn from trees native to your area as they will grow well, fit into the landscape and be valuable for wildlife.
2. The weakest seeds fall from the trees first, so hold back for the next batch!
3. Once collected, keep the seeds in a paper bag in a cool place until you are ready to sow the seeds.

4. Some seeds can be difficult to grow, needing to be put in the freezer or mashed through a sieve. Seeds that are simplest to grow are oak, hazel and horse chestnut (not native).
5. Separate the seeds from their casing, put them in water and only plant the ones that sink. Winged seeds such as field maple and ash grow best if picked when green and planted immediately.
6. Seeds should be planted in pots to at least twice their depth in peat-free compost.
7. With love and care, seedlings should be visible by spring. Water the seedling regularly over the summer by standing the pot in a tray of water.

FACT

Brazil nuts grow in the Amazonian rainforests. The nuts are contained in a hard wooden case, which can weigh up to 1.5kg!



FACT

Seeds can fall from plants and lie in the soil for many years, waiting for conditions to become perfect before germinating. One seed in Denmark is known to have been underground for 850 years before germinating!



8. By wintertime, the seedlings should be big enough to plant. Tree guards or protection by chicken wire circular fencing will stop rabbits and deer nibbling at the trees.