

# Have a seed race

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Last month we talked a little bit about seeds and how they grow up to be plants. Plants produce seeds to be sure there will be more of that kind of plant even when there's no more room for plants to grow. Some plants produce hundreds of seeds, to be successful, they have to have a way of getting the seeds to different places. This month we'll talk about some of those ways and have a seed race.

Have you ever blown the seed puff off a dandelion? Dandelion seeds are specially designed to be carried by the wind. Since they're not fussy about the soil they grow in, anyplace the wind carries them is okay. Seeds from maple trees also like to be carried by the wind, they spin like little helicopters to get to a place where there's room for a new tree to grow.

Sometimes when you play outside or go for a walk, burrs stick to your clothes. Burrs are actually seeds and if you look at them up close you'll see that they have little hooks on them. The burrs are designed to hook onto animal fur so the seed takes a trip to wherever the animal goes and grows wherever it falls off.

Another neat way a seed gets transported is by having fruit or a berry on the outside. Birds and animals are attracted to the fruit and eat it with the seed. Wherever the bird poops out the seed, the plant has a chance to grow! That's pretty sneaky, but it really works for the plant.

As you can see, there are lots of ways for plants to spread their seeds around. To have a seed race, you'll use your breath to imitate the wind and see who can move their seeds the fastest.

## **Seed Race:**

Each player gets five to ten pumpkin seeds (depending on age of children) in a paper cup, a small dish, and a straw. At the "go" signal, players try to pick up a seed and transfer it from the cup to the dish by sucking on the straw. The winner is the first to successfully transfer all their seeds.

Make sure you use whole pumpkin seeds, so there's no way they can be sucked up into the straw and choke you. If you don't have any pumpkin seeds, cut some oval shapes out of paper, about an inch long, and use those instead of seeds. To make this really tough, put the dish across the room so you have to take your seeds a long way!