

# Seed Top-Poppers

*Article written by: Kate Marsland, Master Gardener*

With all the snow on the ground, it's hard to remember what the streets and sidewalks really look like, but I want you to think back to last summer. Can you remember ever seeing a tiny plant pushing it's way up through the asphalt or from a crack in the cement? It's hard to believe a seed can be that strong, but they are. If you don't believe me, try this experiment.

## **You'll need:**

- **A plastic film canister with a lid**
- **Some dried beans or peas**
- **Water**

This experiment goes together so quickly you won't have time to make a mess. Open the film canister and fill it almost to the top with your dried beans. Add water until the canister is full, and put on the lid. It's okay if a little water squeezes out. Now, you're done! All you have to do is wait.

In a few hours, or overnight, the beans (which are really seeds) will absorb water as they start to grow. The force of the swelling beans will pop the lid right off the film canister. When you plant a seed outside, the same thing happens. As seeds fill with water, they send a sprout up that pushes aside the soil and small rocks in its path. The seed contains enough energy to get the sprout started, but a plant needs sunlight to continue to grow so it will push up until it's exposed to the sun. Sprouts really are strong enough to push through hard soils, concrete and rocks.

If you'd like to try a more advanced (and messy) version of this experiment, plant a bean seed in a paper cup or small pot. Give it a little water and then cover the top of the cup with plaster of paris. The plaster will harden and feel hard as a rock, but eventually your seed will push a sprout through it! Try this with different seeds and see how long each takes to break through. You can even try it with different amounts of plaster to see just how strong your seeds really are!

A good story about seeds is [The Tiny Seed](#) by Eric Carle. Check your library for it!