



# Go Play Outside!

## "SEEDY... IN A GOOD WAY"



There are two GREAT things about exploring the world of seeds. One is that they are absolutely everywhere. The other is that, even if you don't know what kind of seed it is, you can often figure out a lot about it just by making simple observations.

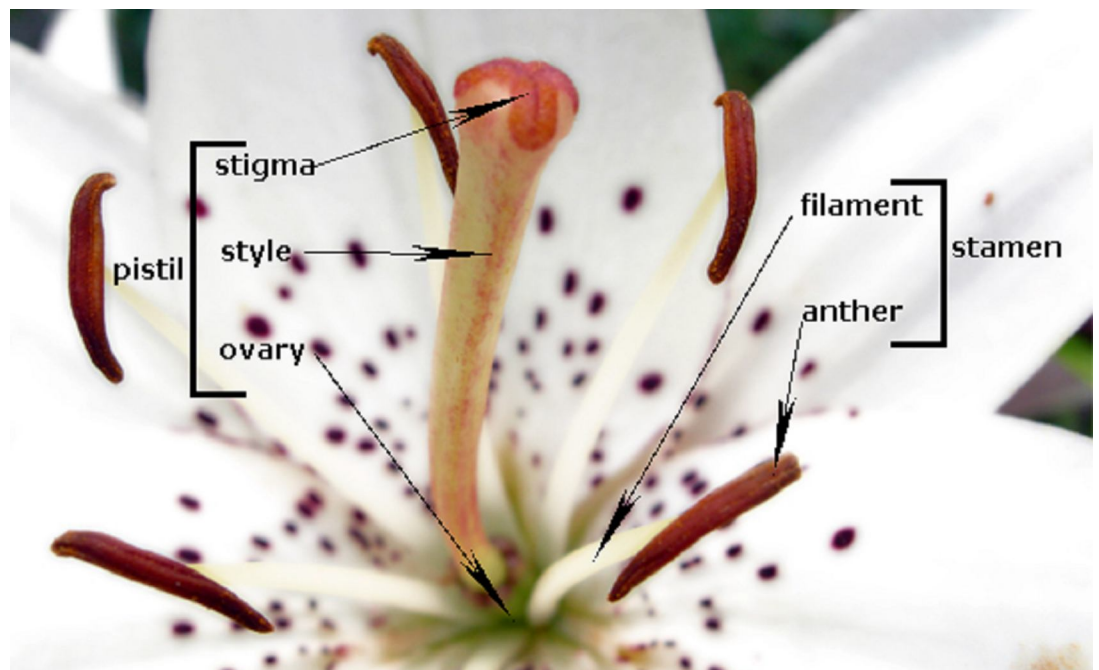
### From the beginning

We're going to have a botany lesson, but I promise to make it fun. I don't know if you're like me, but I have a hard time remembering names of things unless I give it some sort of meaning. I don't know how many times I learned the parts of a flower, only to forget them, or remember the names of the parts but not their functions. If you already know your flower parts, just skip this section and don't laugh at us folks that need a little help.

A flower has two parts, a male part and a female part. The stamen is the male part. You can remember this because it has the word "men" in it! The stamen is made up of a filament and an anther. The filament looks like, well, a filament. Phil the filament, because it's the male part. Phil the filament has an anther on top of him. Anther sounds like antler, and male deer have antlers. So, now we have the male part down! The staMEN is made up of the FILament with an ANTHER on his head! I told you this was silly, but I promise you won't forget it.

Now for the female part. The female portion of the flower is called the pistil, because all women should carry a pistol. There is a stigma against it, but it's just what's in style now. Did you catch that?

The pistil has three parts - the stigma on top (because somebody might try to place a stigma on you), the style (because at your core, you've got to have style) and the ovary. Females everywhere have ovaries, so this is not hard to remember. The ovary is at the bottom, where it is protected. Now, wasn't that fun and easy?!





## What is a seed?

So, now that we know the parts of a flower, where does the seed come in? A seed is a fertilized plant egg. Depending on the age of your kids, you can tell them it is a baby plant. Can a baby plant grow just anywhere? Of course not. It needs some basics like water, sunlight, soil and nutrients.

## What's with all the fanciness?

Think about some of the seeds you have seen. There are seeds inside fruit. There are acorns on oak trees. There are those helicopter things that fall off of maple trees. What's with all of that? Why can't a seed just be a simple seed? It all comes down to dispersal.

## Seeds get around

So, plants have developed quite clever ways of dispersing their seeds! There are basically five ways a seed can travel:

- Wind - Do your kids make wishes on dandelions? All of those little fuzzy pieces that they blow off are seeds. They are able to float on the wind to a new place to grow.
- Water - Some seeds are able to float on water, which is great for plants that grow along streams or rivers. In fact, the largest seed in the world, the coconut, disperses this way!
- Hitchhikers - Do you find burs all over your kids' socks after they have been outside? These are seeds. Their goal is not to end up in your washer, but rather to be picked off or fall off of clothes or animal fur.
- Self-propelled - some seeds are able to shoot themselves away from their parent plant, almost like a slingshot.
- Fruit - Some seeds make themselves attractive to animals by being surrounded by tasty fruit. Most animals eat the fruit, seeds and all, and travel on their way. So, what happens to the seeds? They get "planted" when the animal goes to the bathroom and the seed is deposited! This will be your kids' favorite mode of dispersal to learn about!

## Explore

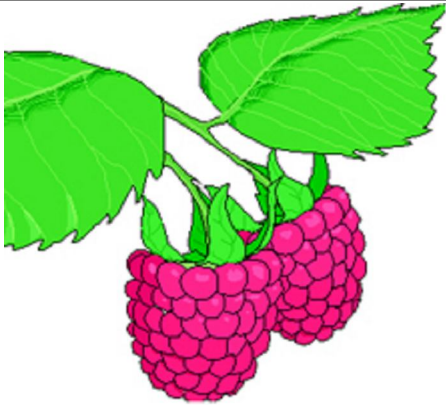
Walk around outside of your home and see what seeds you and your children can find. Can you tell what method of dispersal that seed uses? Does it look like something an animal might like to eat? Does it float in water? Use the flashcards below to quiz yourself and your "seedlings" on the ways seeds can move around! Group the seeds you find into these categories as you explore!

# Have fun playing outside!



## Test your seed savvy!

1.



What does fruit have to do with how seeds travel?

2.



How are some seeds like a hitchhiker getting a ride?

3.



How are some seeds like a slingshot?

4.



How are some seeds like this kite?

5.



How are some seeds like this rubber duckie?

1. The fruit attracts animals who eat the seeds and deposit them when they go to the bathroom.
2. They stick to people's clothes or animal fur.
3. They propel themselves away from their parent plant.
4. They float on the wind.
5. They float on water.

**Answers**

Now that you know how seeds travel, go out and find some seeds near you and figure out which method of moving they're using!