

Seeds Come In Every Shape and Size You Can Imagine!

Each of these fruits and seeds is very different in appearance and they are scattered in many different ways, too. Some coast along the currents of the wind or attach to an animal's stomach! But, no matter how a seed travels or how it looks, one thing remains the same: if it eventually lands in soil and takes root and grows, it will one day become a beautiful tree, proving once more that the cycle of our forest is a complex, harmonious one.



OAK



PECAN



WITCH HAZEL



MANGROVE



BEECH



MAPLE



WILLOW



COCONUT



CHERRY



APPLE



BLACK WALNUT



WHITE PINE

Beautiful Beginnings



APPLE

Many trees depend on animals to spread their seeds. Apple seeds travel unharmed through a horse's digestive tract after the horse eats an apple. Depending on where the horse travels, apple trees may be scattered far and wide. The fancy apples favored by humans can only be reproduced by grafting. Plant the seed of any apple and it will yield only small, sour fruit.



BEECH

Small, oily bechnuts are a tasty part of many animals' diets - from birds to bears. The prickly-husked beechnut can also ride on an animal's pelt if it becomes entangled in its fur. The oil in the nuts, and throughout the tree, supposedly resists electricity, so that beeches are seldom struck by lightning.



BLACK WALNUT

If the squirrels don't find it first, this nut can travel in streams for a long way. It's well protected for the journey by its tough husk. But cracking it is well worth the effort; once for ounce, a walnut has eight times the protein of milk.



CHERRY

Dark red cherries have a juicy pulp around a thin, hard covering that protects the seed. Because cherries ripen in clusters on the tree, they are quickly eaten by birds that then distribute the seeds over wide areas.



COCONUT

Protected by a hard, nearly waterproof covering, this sea-going seed protects the young palm on its journey to shore. Once it reaches a beach, the would-be palm tree can survive if its nucleus, nourished by the coconut "milk," can establish roots. These grow out through the familiar indentations in the shell.



WHITE PINE

High on a tree, mature second-year cones open their scales wide, exposing the winged seeds to the winds. The seeds on a single white pine cone are so plentiful that one cone could populate an entire meadow with trees in just a year or two.



MANGROVE

The fruits of this tropical tree germinate while they're still on the branch. Pointed like little spears, the seeds float to shore and embed deep into the mud where the waves can't dislodge them before they take root.



MAPLE

The graceful maple "rotors" belong to a botanical group known as samaras, or winged seeds. Each wing falls with a spinning motion that slows its descent. In a breeze, it can carry its seed hundreds of yards or more before reaching the ground.



OAK

Because acorns need to be planted in order to germinate, oak trees often depend on hoarding squirrels to bury them in order to get their start. The acorns most preferred by animals are the slowest to appear - a white oak often does not begin to produce its hollow-cupped nuts until it is about 50 years old.



PECAN

Even though its shell is thin, the pecan nut can float for long distances and still take root. Nuts from wild trees are delicious and rich in food value. Control-breeding selected trees produce even larger nuts, with thinner shells and more delicate flavor.



WILLOW

These seeds are also airborne, but with a difference. Because they're embedded in fluffy tufts, these seeds can be propelled by the slightest breeze! In the right conditions - good soil, sun, and rain - they will then germinate in just a few hours, putting out tiny green shoots.



WITCH HAZEL

Witch hazel pods contract as they dry, squeezing the seeds inside. When it's time, the witch hazel fires its seeds out of their pods like a shot, sometimes as far as ten feet away. As a result, new seedlings can grow uncrowded by the parent tree.