

Seed Dispersal



DISPERSAL OF SEEDS

*The process by which the seeds are scattered away from the parent plant is called **seed dispersal**.*

What is the need for seed dispersal?

Seed dispersal is important for the proper growth and survival of the parent plant as well as the new plants. If seeds do not get dispersed far away, they will grow very close to the parent plant. They will then compete for the light, air, space to grow, water, and nutrients in the soil. Many of them would die. Hence, many plants have developed ways to scatter their seeds away from them. This ensures that the seeds do not grow too close to one another. There are different ways by which seeds are dispersed.

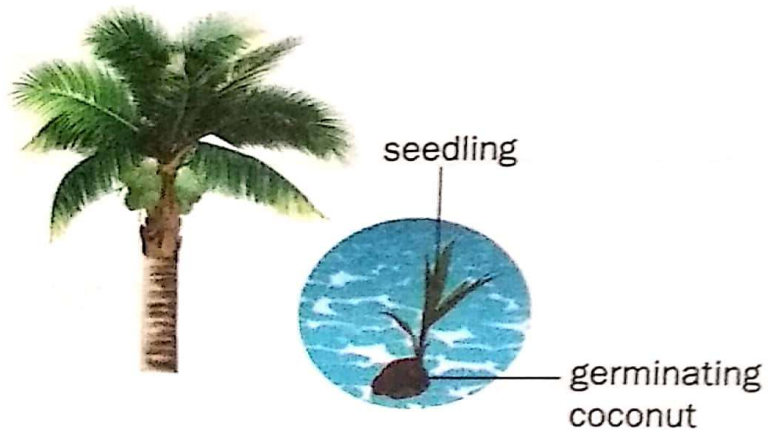
Dispersal by wind

Seeds of some plants are light in weight and have wing-like structures. They are easily carried away to other places by wind.

- **Dandelion seeds** have hair that act like a parachute.
- **Maple seeds** have wing-like structures. The wind carries these seeds away from the parent plant.



Dandelion flower dispersing its seeds



Seeds of the coconut palm
are dispersed by water

Dispersal by water

Seeds of plants that grow in or near water are dispersed by water. Fruits of the coconut palm have a fibrous covering that makes them lighter, and helps them to float on water.

Dispersal by Animals and Human Beings

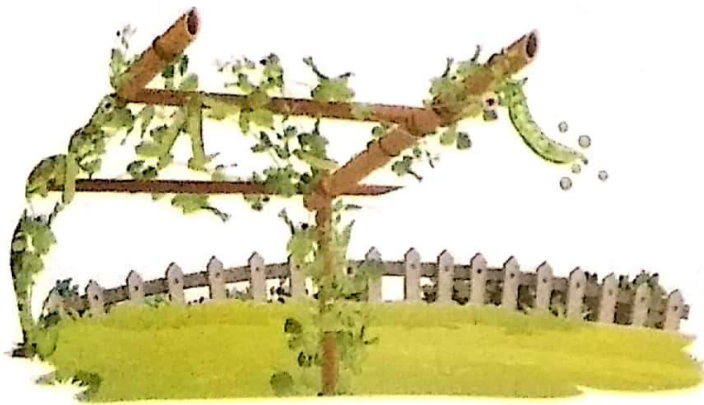
Animals and human beings eat juicy fruits like apple, mango, litchi and orange and throw the seeds. Some seeds have hook-like structures that help them to cling to the fur, hair or skin of the animals and to be carried off to far-off places.

Cocklebur and mistletoe are examples of plants whose seeds are dispersed by animals.

Birds eat whole berries and small fruits. The seeds do not get digested and are dispersed through their droppings.



▲ Berries



Pea plant dispersing seeds

Dispersal by explosion of fruit

Some fruits, such as the **pea** and **balsam**, burst open forcefully when they dry and liberate their seeds. The seeds fall on the ground away from the place where the parent plant is growing.

Home-Work

Match the following.

1. Wind
2. Water
3. Birds
4. Human beings
5. Explosion

- a. Mango
- b. Berries
- c. Cotton
- d. Poppy
- e. Coconut