

Name _____

Date _____



Seeds in Fall...Collect Them All! Family Page



Question: How much tree biodiversity is in your area?

What's Happening in Class?

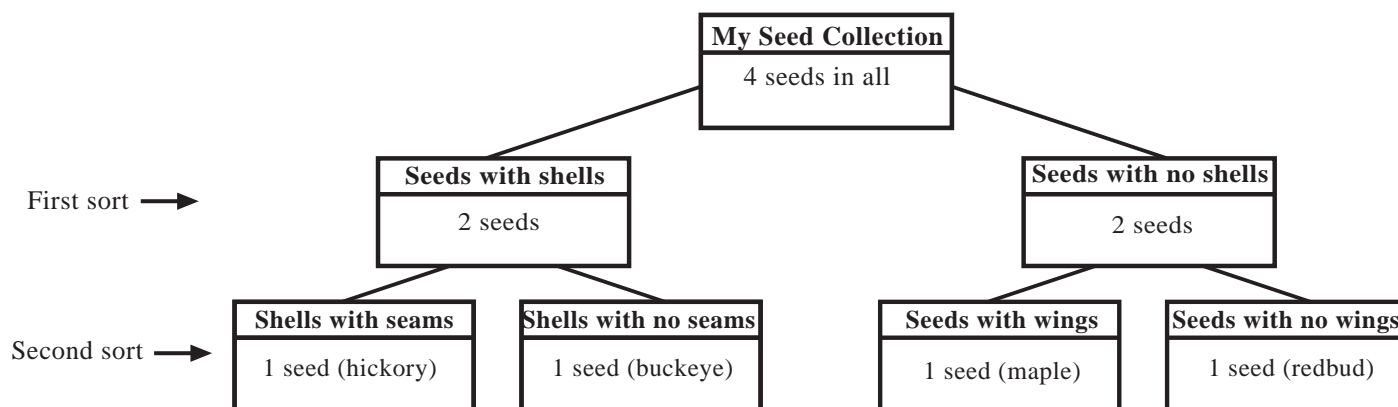
We are studying the diversity of tree species in our area by collecting varieties of tree seeds found around our homes. These collected seeds will be the clues to the level of biodiversity (richness of living things) in our area. Seeds will also be used to provide a hands-on way for your child to explore dichotomous keying at school. For more specific information on this lesson, visit the *Science for Ohio* website at www.environmentaleducationohio.org and click on the *Seeds In Fall...* inquiry.

What Can We Do at Home?

1) Help your child to set aside time for seed hunting. You may even wish to make this a family event. The following tips will help when collecting seeds:

- Number matching seeds and leaf samples with a fine tip marker and/or tape so they can be matched up during identification. Attach seeds to their labels.
- Press leaves in a large book or paper grocery bag within one hour of collection. This will allow them to dry flat and not curl up. Avoid keeping leaves in plastic bags as they will decay.
- Collect seeds in a paper bag so they may air dry and won't decay. Wait to collect fleshy seeds (i.e., apple, crabapple) until just prior to the due date to minimize rotting and/or dehydration.

2) A dichotomous key is used to sort objects **two** attributes at a time until each object has its own unique and lasting set of attributes. For example, the buckeye seed below is the only seed in the collection that has a shell and no seams. Help your child to make a dichotomous key like the one below using the seeds collected from around your home. Start with four seeds, then try eight or more. Remember to use lasting attributes (size, shape, color) rather than nonlasting attributes (wet vs. dry, scratched vs. not scratched).



3) Play *Guess Who?* by Milton Bradley to reinforce the concept of "attribute."

4) Consult the following resources to learn more about trees and seeds.

Books

*National Audubon Society Field Guide to
North American Trees*
ISBN 0-394-50760-6

A Golden Guide--Trees
ISBN 0-307-24056-8

World Wide Web

Visit *Science for Ohio's Seeds In Fall...*
Related Resources page to find World Wide
Web links related to seed identification.