

Seed Dispersal

PUPPET SHOW

Characters: Mary Maple Seed (on a dowel so she spins), Mama Maple Tree, Milkweed Seed, Carol Cranberry, Charlie Chipmunk, Maple Seedling

Prop: sign saying "NEXT SPRING"

Mary Maple Seed

Mama, what am I going to be when I grow up?

Mama Maple Tree

A maple tree, just like me, dear.

Maple Seed

Well, where am I going to live, Mama?

Maple Tree

I don't know, my little maple sugar, but someplace far enough away from me so that your roots will have space to grow and your leaves can get all the sunshine they need.

Maple Seed

How am I going to get there?

Maple Tree

I'm not sure. You might fly or float in water or be carried by an animal.

Maple Seed

Boy, that sounds exciting! I wonder which I'll do. Do all seeds fly and float and get rides to get away from their parents?

Maple Tree

No, dear. Some seeds have such special designs that they can only travel one way. I'm sure you'll meet many different kinds of seeds on your journey.
[big wind noises]

Maple Seed

Yikes! I guess I'm going by air. Bye, Mama. *[Maple Tree exits]* Wow, I'm getting dizzy spinning around like this. *[Milkweed Seed enters]*

Milkweed Seed

You poor thing. I'm glad I don't spin that way. I'm so well rounded, I just float along like a parachute.

Maple Seed

You sure do, Milkweed Seed. Me? I'm like a helicopter propeller spinning out of control! I just know I'm going to crash-land somewhere.

Milkweed Seed

Well, I'll be drifting along. Good luck and Goodbyyyee! *[exits]*

Maple Seed

Hey, where am I? I've stopped spinning, and I'm all wet – this must be a river. It's a good thing I can float. Wow, I'm really going fast – Ouch! That rock hurt. *[Cranberry enters]*

Carol Cranberry

It doesn't hurt if you're built like me. I'm so bouncy and light, I can hardly feel those things. But I sure wish I could get back to the bog...I wanted to travel, but not **this** far!

Maple Seed

Gosh, you are a **really** good floater. Do cranberries always travel by water? How did you get here?

Cranberry

Whoa! Too many questions. We do usually travel by water, if we don't end up in sauce...but I got here because that silly bird that picked me didn't eat me in the bog. It dropped me in a brook instead, and I've been going downstream ever since.

Maple Seed

Well, at least you didn't get eaten.

Cranberry

Oh, I don't know – I'm actually designed for that – the little seeds inside my red coat would've gone right through that bird and done just fine. Now I don't know where I'm headed...but life's an adventure, isn't it? Whee – here I go – goodbye, little Maple Seed! *[exits]*

Maple Seed

Goodbye, Cranberry! Gee, she sure is a better water floater than I am. I'd like to get **out** of this river. It's rough! *[bobs up and down, then stops]* Whew! Lucky thing that big wave just washed me up on the shore. But now what? *[sniffs a little]* I can't live here. It's too cold and muddy for a maple. How can I get to a good place, like my Mama said?
[Charlie Chipmunk enters, bustling back and forth]

Charlie Chipmunk

Gotta hurry. Gotta hurry. Have to collect all my seeds before winter. Gotta hurry.

Maple Seed

Goodness, who is that? I wish he'd slow down. He makes me nervous.

Chipmunk

Hello, Maple Seed. I'm Charlie Chipmunk, out collecting seeds.

Maple Seed

Well, that's funny. I thought I just saw you getting rid of seeds. Weren't you rubbing against that rock to scrape some seeds off your back?

Chipmunk

Yes, I was, but I didn't want those prickly seeds. They were just trying to hitchhike to a new spot. They stick in my fur and get it all tangled. They're awful! But **you** look good. Want to come home with me? I'll give you a ride over to my secret hiding place. *[secretly to the audience]* I won't tell her that she's next winter's dinner!

Maple Seed

Sure. My mama said an animal might carry me to a good place to grow up. Where are we going?

Chipmunk

Oh, you'll see soon. *[Charlie picks up Mary, runs across stage, puts her down]* Here we are. A nice, cozy hole in the ground. I'll just leave you with these other seeds. Catch you later. *[Chipmunk exits]*

Maple Seed

My goodness, there are a lot of seeds here. I wonder why. I seem to be way over on the side. I wonder if that matters. *[Chipmunk reappears]*

Chipmunk

Here I am back again, in time for a little supper. A couple of maple seeds will taste good, then maybe some sunflower seeds for dessert. *[nibble, nibble]* Lovely – now I'm off again, got to get a lot more seeds. Winter's coming. Gotta hurry. *[Chipmunk exits]*

Maple Seed

Whew, that was close! Now I know why the chipmunk brought me here. I'm sure glad he dropped me way over here at the edge of this hole. If I'm lucky, he'll forget about me.

[Maple Seed exits; sign saying NEXT SPRING appears briefly; Maple Seedling enters]

Maple Seedling

Hurray! I made it through the winter, and here I am starting to grow, with leaves and roots and everything! It'll probably take me a long time before I'm as tall as my mother, but I'm off to a good start. Goodbye, everyone. *[exits]*

Reproduced with permission of the publisher: Lingelbach and Purcell, eds. Hands-On Nature, 2nd edition. Woodstock: Vermont Institute of Natural Science, 2000.