

ATE Learning Resources

Growing Groundnuts – Science Activity



Growing Groundnuts

Benjamin and his family enjoy a meal made with groundnuts.

Peanuts are not true nuts, they are the legumes, or pods, of the peanut plant. Legumes are a group of foods that grow their seeds in pods that split open on the sides. Peas, beans and peanuts are all members of the legume family.

Most legumes have soft pods and grow on top of the ground, but not peanuts. Because peanuts ripen underground, they are sometimes called groundnuts. Peanuts grow in warm areas throughout the world and thrive in sandy soil.

Peanut seedlings rise out of the soil about 10 days after planting. They grow into a green oval-leafed plant about 18 inches tall.

The peanut plant is a low bush. Small yellow flowers grow on the lower part of the plant. Yellow flowers emerge around the lower portion of the plant about 40 days after planting.

After a peanut flower receives pollen from another flower, it begins to wither. A stem called a peg then grows from the bottom of the flower. It anchors itself in the soil. The tip of each peg develops into a pod beneath the soil. This underground pod becomes the peanut—a shell with two to four seeds inside.

The plant continues to grow and flower, eventually producing some 40 or more pods. Over its lifetime, the peanut plant will produce about 40 peanut pods before dying.

From planting to harvesting, the growing cycle of a peanut takes four to five months, depending on the type and variety.

Can you put the pictures in the right order?

Write a sentence, using the text to help you, to describe each stage of the plant.

If you can't print the pictures, have a go at drawing the plant at each stage.

For teachers and parents: National Curriculum Links

Spoken Language:

- Organise ideas for writing
- Identify and summarise key details

Reading & Writing:

- Expand your range of writing

Vocabulary Development:

- Increase your store of words
- Understand the meaning of words

Science:

- Describe how seeds and bulbs grow into mature plants
- Identify and describe the functions of different parts of flowering plants
- Explore the part that flowers play in the life cycle of flowering plants