Seeds Dispersal

Ever wondered how weeds seem to get everywhere in our gardens? One minute your lawn can be lovely and green and the next it's covered - and I mean covered - in dandelions! Well, it's all to do with the clever way that plants reproduce, and spread their seeds far and wide to keep their species alive.

Making the Seeds

So, how do the plants make so many seeds?

Many plants have female parts (including the ovule and stigma) and male parts (including the stamen). Bees and other insects are attracted to the flowers because of their lovely aromas and colours. While they're at the flower, they help move pollen from the male parts to the female parts in order to fertilise the plant. This process is called pollination. Sometimes the wind can also help with this.

Once the plant is fertilised, the seeds can grow. When this happens in a dandelion, the yellow flower turns into what we call a dandelion 'clock'. If you look closely at a dandelion clock, or 'seed head', it is full of dark coloured seeds with light, feathery, white tops that look like umbrellas.

Fact File

- A weed is only a plant that someone does not want in their garden. They can be very pretty!
- Nettles can be used for making tea and medicines, so they are actually very useful.
- The world's largest weed is giant hogweed. It can grow up to 3.65m in height and have leaves that measure 91cm long.
- Some people think that if you hold a buttercup under your chin and the yellow reflects on your skin, it means that you like butter.

Spreading the Seeds

So, how do the seeds get everywhere?

This is the clever bit...

As we said before, dandelions make lots and lots of seeds. They all have feathery, white tops that look like umbrellas. This makes the seeds perfect for floating and flying through the air. So, all they need is the wind, which carries them off landing near and far – some up to 500m away from the parent plant. Before you know it, there are hundreds of seeds all over your lawn, which are all ready to germinate and make yet more dandelions. Other flowers and plants also have other clever ways of spreading their seeds, including putting them inside tasty fruit so that animals eat them. Eventually, the seeds come out of the other end in their poo and start to germinate!

LIVEWORKSHEETS

1 Mark if these sentences are true or false.

1. The world's largest weed is the giant dandelion. **True / False**
2. Dandelions seeds are good at floating in the air because they are light and feathery. **True / False**
3. Bees are the only insects that can move pollen around. **True / False**
4. Dandelions make only a few seeds. **True / False**
5. Dandelion seeds look like umbrellas. **True / False**
6. The furthest distance a dandelion's seed can float away is 500m. **True / False**

2 Choose the correct answer.

1. What are the dark-colored objects that you can see in a dandelion clock?

a) Seeds b) Flowers c) Fruits

2. How tall can the largest weed grow?

a) 91 cm b) 3.65 cm c) 3.65 m

3. Name something that can move seeds around

a) Animals b) Wind c) A and B are correct

4. What is another name for dandelion "clock"?

a) Seed head b) Umbrella c) Flower

5. Bees are attracted to the flowers because of

a) Their forms b) Their taste c) Their colors

6. Name one of the female parts of the flower.

a) Stamen b) Stigma c) Roots

3 Answer these questions from the text. Write COMPLETE sentences.

Example: What is the pollination?

Move pollen from the male parts of the plant to the female parts.

What is a weed?

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What is a good thing that nettles can be used for?

_____

What do some people think it means if a buttercup reflects yellow under your chin?

_____

LIVEWORKSHEETS