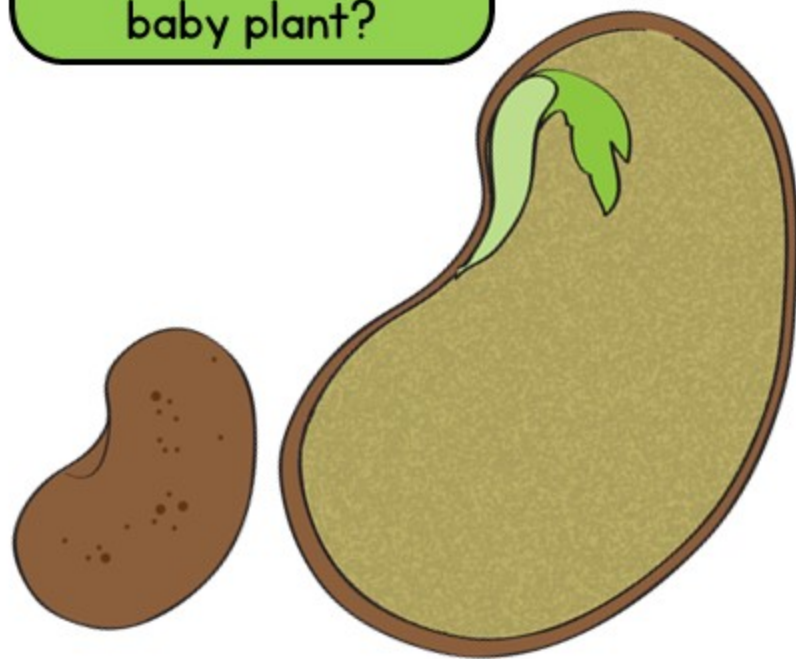


Adaptations for Dispersing Seeds





Look inside this
bean seed.
Can you find the
baby plant?



Many species of plants reproduce, or make more of themselves, by making seeds. Each seed contains a tiny baby plant, usually with a protective covering and some stored food inside.

Lima Bean
Sprout



Once a seed is made, simply dropping that seed nearby is not always a good way for a plant to reproduce. Plants need water, light, space, and air. If an area is too shady or crowded, seeds will not be able to grow into adult plants. This is why many plants have adapted, or changed over time, to better disperse, or spread out, their seeds.



Dandelion

Some plants have adapted to use wind to disperse their seeds.

Dandelions are a common example. Dandelion seeds are very light and have a white, parachute-like puff attached. A gust of wind or a simple blow will send the seeds flying.



Fallen Coconut on
the Beach

Other plants, like the coconut tree, use water to spread their seeds. Coconuts are buoyant, or able to float, and carry the tree's seeds. They often grow near water. If a coconut drops into the water, it can float to a new location and grow a new tree there.



Still other plants use animals to disperse their seeds. Some plants surround their seeds with good tasting fruit. When an animal eats the fruit, it also eats the plant seeds. When the animal digests the fruit, its droppings include seeds. This may spread them to a new area.



Burdock



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Sandspur

Other plants use animals to disperse seeds in a different way. The seeds belonging to these plants have hooks or prickles that grab onto animals' fur or stick into skin. When the animal licks or brushes off the seeds, they can be spread to a new location.