

Using IT in... plants / recycling

Plants

How are seeds dispersed?

The 'wings' from a Sycamore tree vary in size and fall -differently - very useful in dispersing the seeds more widely. The children can collect 30 wings and measure their length, width and how long they take to fall. A **database program** can help them to record and analyse their findings. For example, using a count graph, they can show how much the wings vary in size. Older children can take things further, they can plot a scattergraph to answer: do the wider wings fall more slowly? Do the longer wings fall more quickly?

You can do a similar exercise comparing conkers and how well they bounce. The children enter their measurements of conkers into a **database**

The best size for a leaf				
Leaf number	Leaf width	Leaf length	Prickles	
1				
2				

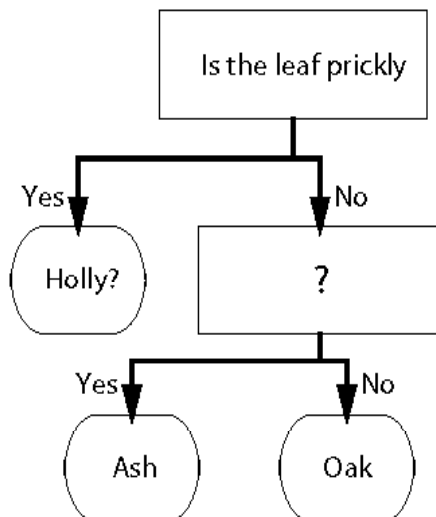
program and try to answer: do larger conkers bounce higher or do heavier conkers bounce higher?

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Can you identify this... ?

You can use a **branching database** program to create a 'key' to help you identify almost any plant. The exercise is also a good way of sharpening children's observation skills too. You collect a set of pictures of plants - or fruit, seeds, beans, leaves and the children use them to build up a key on the computer. The section on branching databases has further details of this worthy activity.

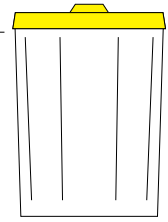
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Recycling

What is waste?

As an exercise on waste, children can survey the bins around the school. They can sort the waste and record what they find using a **word processor**. You might set up the word processor with a blank table and the children can fill what they find. They can say whether the item will go rusty, go mouldy, go squashy, go soggy or stay the same.



With older children you might use a more analytical tack: the children can count or weigh what they find and record this in a **spreadsheet** program. They can use the program to draw a pie chart showing the contents of a bin. You might ask: How much of our waste can be recycled? How much could be used for compost? How much will cause a problem in the future?

	A	B	C	D
1	Testing sycamore keys			
2	Key	Fall time	Length	Width
3	A			
4	B			

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