

Bean Sprout Science

Springtime flowers bring plenty of color, and lots of questions from your third grader. Young children often wonder how all of these plants and flowers suddenly appear when the weather gets warmer. “Bean Sprouts” is a simple, hands-on activity that will answer many of your child's questions, and give her a close-up look at what happens when a seed gets plenty of sunlight and water. After completing this fun science project, your child will have a better understanding of plants – and may develop a green thumb in the process!

What You Need:

- Cookie sheet
- Paper towel
- Three kinds of bean seeds: we recommend mung, green, and lima
- Water



What You Do:

1. Show the bean seed to your child and let her inspect it. Point out the hard shell that surrounds the actual seed, and the tiny hole that allows water to flow to the plant inside. Explain to her that in order for the plant to sprout and break through the shell, it will need an ample amount of water and sunlight.
2. Ask your child to moisten 3-4 paper towels and layer them on the cookie sheet. Next, spread the bean seeds on top of the damp paper towels. Finally, lay 3-4 more damp paper towels on top of the bean seeds. With your child, choose a safe spot for the tray, one that gets ample (but not too much) sunlight.
3. Give your child a small notebook for recording her observations. As her first entry, have her predict how many days it will take for her beans to sprout. Remind your child to moisten the paper towel and check on her bean seeds daily. She should observe the seeds and record any changes.
4. After 5-6 days, the beans should have sprouted. If not, direct your child to keep them covered and damp for a few more days and continue observing changes.
5. Once the beans sprout, follow up with some questions for your third grader. What was inside the bean? (a seed/tiny plant) Why do you think it needs a hard shell around it? (for protection) How did the seed get water? (the tiny hole) What would happen to the seed if it couldn't get water and sunlight? (it wouldn't sprout) Where do you see evidence of this simple activity outside? (seeds get blown by the wind and can sprout anywhere if they get enough sunlight and water).

Note: If there is room in your garden, give your child a small spot to plant her bean seeds.

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