

Pine Cone Weather Forecast

Science Experiment



Method

1. Begin by encouraging the children to look closely at the pine cones. They may like to sort them into different groups based on size, open/closed etc.
2. Explain that pine cones come from pine trees – a type of conifer. They have lots of seeds inside them that get carried by the wind and fall onto the ground, where new trees start to grow.
3. Encourage the children to use a magnifying glass to look carefully and see some of the papery seeds inside the pine cones. They could also wrap a pine cone in a paper towel and gently roll it around to release some of the seeds.
4. Explain that pine cones are clever because they change according to different weather conditions to give the seeds inside them the best chance of growing into new trees.
5. Show the children the container of water and ask them to carefully place an open pine cone into the water. Encourage them to predict what they think will happen to the pine cone and then to watch carefully.
6. After several minutes, the pine cone should swell and appear to close up.
7. Remove the pine cone from the water and encourage the children to compare it to a dry, open pine cone.
8. Then you can create a weather forecast area! Use sticky tack to stick some pine cones onto an outside shelf or windowsill. You could also use some string to tie some pine cones onto a door frame or tree branches.
9. Encourage the children to observe any changes over the next few days – if the weather is rainy or humid the pine cones should close up; if it is dry the pine cones should open.

You will need:

- A selection of pine cones
- Magnifying glasses
- An outside shelf or windowsill
- Sticky tack or string
- A container of water
- Paper towels