

## **Lesson Plan: The Acorn or Oaknut, Trees and Squirrels**

**Objective:** Develop an understanding of connections between nuts and trees

**Question:** How does an acorn grow into a tree?

**Materials:** Tree nuts, Planting Soil, 12" long cylindrical, clear plastic containers (tennis ball can), water, sun.

**Pre-Activity:** What kind of trees in your region produce nuts? How do you identify the tree by bark and leaf? Who might have already picked up and buried the nuts? Learn all you can about nuts. (Walnut, Butternut, Hazelnut, Hickory, Chestnut)

**Activity:** Walk in the woods. Find a short, sturdy stick. Look for a healthy nut-bearing tree, such as an oak. Lightly scrape the layer of leaves on the ground near the tree to look for nuts. Collect them. Did you know squirrels dig more holes than they use – to confuse other squirrels who might want to steal them?

**Research Experiment:** Drill drainage hole in bottom of container. Fill container  $\frac{3}{4}$  full with potting soil. Place 1 nut on soil. Cover with 2" soil. Water lightly. Record date, location and type of nut. Place container in sun and water lightly as needed. Record observations once a week. In the meantime, continue to research types of trees that bear nuts, the benefits of nuts – draw a picture of nuts and trees. Observe squirrels in the fall as they dig holes and hide (or pretend to) nuts. Research squirrels. If nut sprouts and grows roots, transplant into a hole in ground, water, cover and continue to observe it for growth.