



All About Acorns

Activity:

Look for an oak tree with acorns. Sometimes as you are walking along the sidewalk you see many acorns lying on the ground, under a tree. Sometimes they are still attached to the tree. Notice the leaves and bark of the tree where you find the acorns. Look carefully at one of the acorns, checking for holes. Also, see if the cap is still on the acorn. Ask a parent if you can take some home. You could make acorn people, using thin markers to decorate the faces and glue the acorns on other acorns, without caps, for the bodies. You could also try sprouting an acorn by keeping it wrapped in a damp paper towel until it sprouts a tiny root. Then you can plant it somewhere there will be lots of sunshine. Plant it only about an inch and a half under the soil. Water it every other day until you see leaves coming out of the ground.

Questions to ask:

Why do oak trees make acorns?

(Acorns are the seeds for the tree, to make new oak trees. Trees and squirrels work together to move the seeds away from the tree.)

What is the cap on the acorn for?

(It is the part of the seed that held it to the branch. When it dries out the acorn falls off and rolls away.)

Are squirrels good or bad for the oak tree?

(Squirrels are good for the oak trees because they move the seeds all around and give more room for the small trees to grow. Yes, squirrels eat acorns, but not all of them.)

Why are there some years that there are many acorns and other years only a few?

(It takes a lot of energy to make seeds, so oak trees wait until there was a year with plenty of water and sunshine. Then they make a lot of seeds, more than the squirrels can eat, so that some of them can become trees. It is a process called "masting.")

