

Name: _____ Date: _____
 Student Worksheet



The double life of a squirrel

Seed disperser and predator

Because they cannot move, plants have developed a diverse range of strategies to spread their genetic material: from producing tasty fruits to entice birds and mammals to encasing seeds in structures that can be carried off by the wind. Small mammals, like squirrels and mice, can be both beneficial and destructive for plant seeds – they serve as dispersal agents, moving seeds far from parent plants and into beneficial habitats, or as predators, consuming seeds before they have had a chance to germinate. Using squirrels as a study system, we will explore importance of squirrel behavior human disturbance influencing seed dispersal.

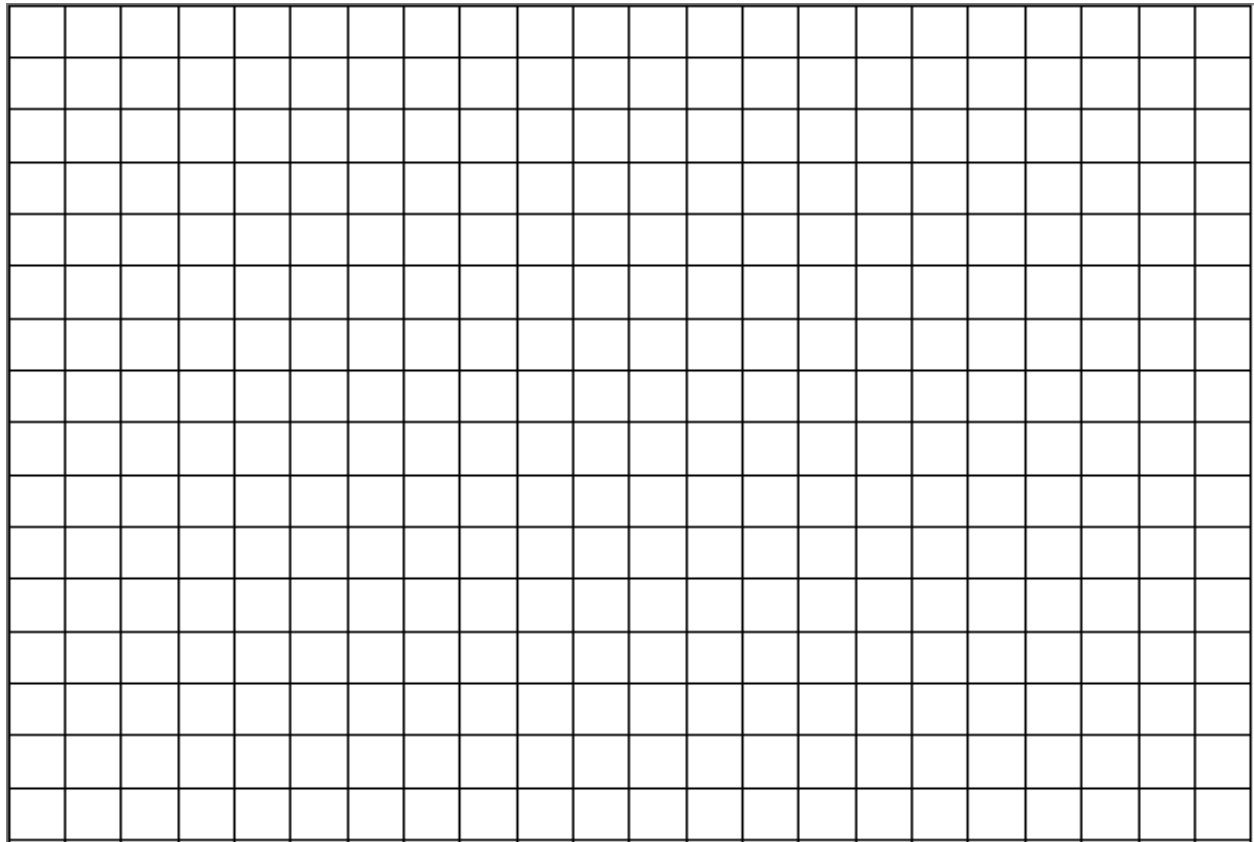
In this lesson you will discuss dispersal and predation as major forces determining the fate of a seed. You will conduct an experiment where you measure squirrel removal of seeds from a seed trap to determine their activity in a variety of habitats around your schoolyard. Using this data, you will go through the scientific method, from hypothesis generation to conclusion. As a class we will explore Project Squirrel, a citizen science database where you can submit and explore data on squirrel behavior.

Hypothesis:

Data to collect:

		Experimental Data				
		Tray #				
Open Field	1					
	2					
	3					
	4					
Forest	5					
	6					
	7					
	8					

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Results:

Conclusions:
