

Squirrels and Jays Game

(kids enjoy this game)

Both Scrub Jays and Squirrels hide seeds for later consumption during months when food scarce. Sometimes they forget where they've hidden their food or they leave some of their winter cache in the ground. As a result, seeds are left to grow. Squirrels and Jays are important to the lifecycle of oak and some pine trees.



<https://gardenwalkgardentalk.com/2011/11/23/the-blue-jay-and-the-peanut-story/>

Now we are going to play a game that illustrates how squirrels and jays might play a role in seed dispersal.

Your class will use colored pasta (one color per teacher) as the 'seeds'. The students can hide them around the garden. Please remind students to work quietly, as classes are in session.

1. Make two teams: SQUIRRELS and JAYS
2. Give the Squirrels 1 seed each (count how many seeds there are total)
3. Squirrels have 1 minute (you can adapt time as you see fit) to hide their "seeds". While they do that, have the Jays turn their backs away from the squirrels – No Peeking!
4. Blue Jays come through and look for the seeds of your classes' color (need 1 to survive) (have 1 minute or you can adapt time as you see fit).
5. Squirrels come back through; they each need to find at least 1 seed of your classes color to survive (1 minute or timed as you see fit).
6. Conclusions: Who survived? Who didn't? Are there seeds left out there? What will happen to them? (They will remain and grow).

If there is time, switch groups so that both have a chance to hide or find seeds.