

## Wind pollinated food

### Understand the variety of foods that are wind pollinated

**Aim:** to understand that wind pollinated food plants are mostly grasses, and that if we lose our pollinating insects the variety of foods available to us will be very much reduced.

When learning about pollination schools tend to focus on insect pollination, but remember to emphasise:

- 1) that there are many insect pollinators, not just bees
- 2) wind pollination is also important.

Children are often surprised to discover that many of the foods they eat are actually wind pollinated 'grasses', for example wheat, barley, oats, sweetcorn, rice and bamboo.

#### Activity:

Children sort the items you have provided, discussing the following points for each food item:

- Where did it (or its ingredients) grow? What do these locations tell us about food miles? For example, the vanilla beans for ice cream; cocoa beans for chocolate; rice.
- How is it pollinated - wind or insect generally or both?
- Consider which foods globally are at risk from the reduction in pollinating insects and other animals. What factors are affecting insect and animal numbers?
- What foods would we be left with if there were no insect pollinators?

This last question provokes good discussion – for example, we might have the pizza bread base, but no tomato sauce to go on top; we may have the milk for ice cream from cows that eat grass, but no vanilla or chocolate flavours as both are insect pollinated and grow in distant countries.

#### More springboards:

- Science Learning Springboards: pollination; food chains and food webs; seed dispersal and habitats; pollination dance.
- Pappus Plant ID sheet: Grass.



#### Resources:

- A selection of food packets and real items that represent a variety of insect pollinated and wind pollinated foods, such as apple, pear, tomato, potato, piece of bread, sweetcorn cob, porridge oats, rice, chocolate bar, fresh vanilla pod, ice cream, bamboo shoots, pizza.
- If you have arable fields close to you, bring in stems of wheat, barley etc., or use images.



RHS school gardening

#### Key vocabulary:

Pollination, pollinators, sustainability, climate change, arable.

#### Success criteria:

- ✓ I understand two different methods of pollination.
- ✓ I can name and describe foods that are made from wind pollinated crops.

