

activities



Types of Wheat in New Zealand



The Wheaty Head revisited

Find out how much water, light and temperature your Wheaty Head needs to grow.

Make three Wheaty Heads and design a fair test based on one of the above three conditions. If you test the water condition you could have one Wheaty Head always soaking in water, another watered once a day, and the other kept dry with a little water once a week or fortnightly. Make sure the light and temperature is the same for all of them so that you have a fair test.

Everyday, measure the rate of 'hair' growth with a tape measure and record your results on a chart. When you have found the best conditions for growing your Wheaty Head try finding out what happens if you feed one with plant food and the other just water.



Window Wheat Garden

You will need:

A clear, waterproof tape such as surgical tape
A bag that seals

A paper towel
Four to eight wheat seeds.

Method:

Tape the seeds near the bottom of the paper towel (make sure you have enough room for the roots to grow). Put the paper towel inside the bag. Add enough water to soak the towel, then pour off the excess. Seal the bag and tape to a window. Water occasionally as outlined above. Now you can observe which way the roots, stem and leaves grow from a seed. Draw and label pictures of the daily changes you observe.



Ripe Wheat

In New Zealand, wheat is planted during the autumn months (March, April, May) and harvested during the summer months (December, January, February). Monthly visits to a wheat crop will give you a brilliant insight into the stages of ripening. Either plant your own small crop or visit a farm. In a scrapbook, record your observations when the wheat is first planted, then every month after that until it is harvested. For each visit, record the date and the average weather conditions for that month. During your visits, measure the height of an average wheat stalk, draw a detailed coloured picture, and take a grain sample.



How does the weather affect wheat farming?

You probably have a fairly good idea if you did the 'Ripe Wheat' activity. More information can be found in newspapers, farming magazines, and books in libraries. Once you have read all this information you'll have some amazing questions to ask a wheat farmer when you interview him or her.



New Zealand grows quite a number of different varieties of wheat. Can you think of any reasons why this is so? What problems can you foresee? What are the advantages and disadvantages for the farmer, miller, transporter, and the consumer? After researching the answers to these questions decide whether having a large number of wheat cultivars is the best thing for New Zealand. Present your findings and conclusion in a flow diagram.