

Our Natural World

Context: During outdoor playtime, our children began to explore the garden, inspecting and collecting leaves and flowers. When they were outdoors, it was a common occurrence for tamarind pods to fall all around them from the tree under which they were playing. They began to collect these pods as well. We observed this building fascination with the natural world among our children and asked ourselves - **"What could we do inside our classroom to support our children's growing interest in plants?"**

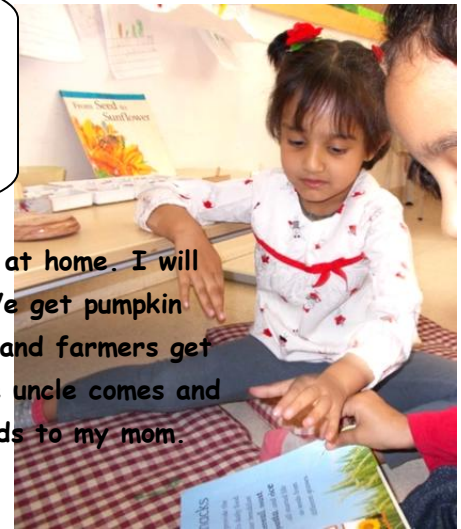


We set up an exploration table with a variety of seeds, a few magnifying glasses, and some resources for children to record their discoveries and wonderings. What unfolded was several days of fascinated exploration and rich conversations - children made personal connections, asked questions, created theories, and expressed their observations using descriptive language.

Some seeds are big and some are small. Seeds are found inside the fruit. Birds take seeds and put them somewhere and then people take them and grow them.



I have orange seeds at home. I will bring it to school. We get pumpkin seeds from farmers and farmers get it from flowers. One uncle comes and gives flower and seeds to my mom.



Mustard is very tiny, we can't even see it. But we can see it with a magnifying glass. Why is the light coming through the magnifying glass? I think the tubelight light is falling on the glass and that's why we see this light.



My mom eats pumpkin seeds. Papaya seeds are very squishy!

See, these are the seeds of a strawberry!



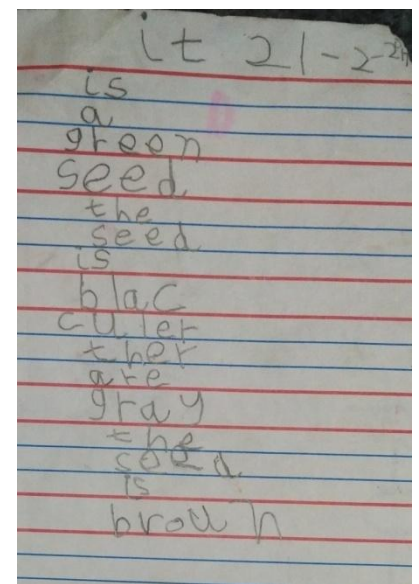
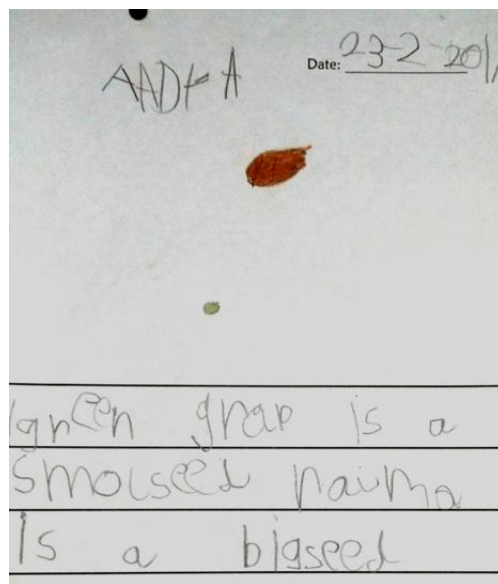
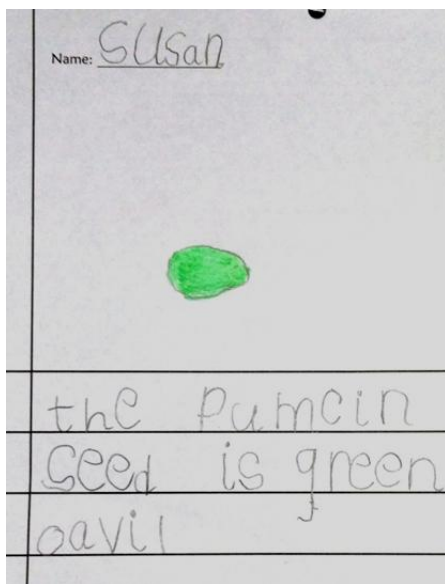
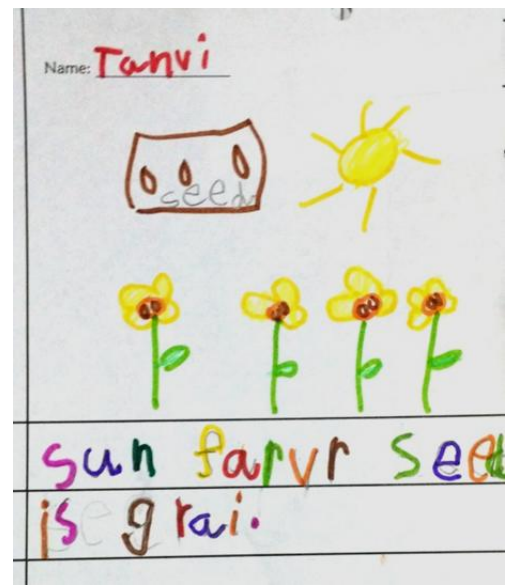
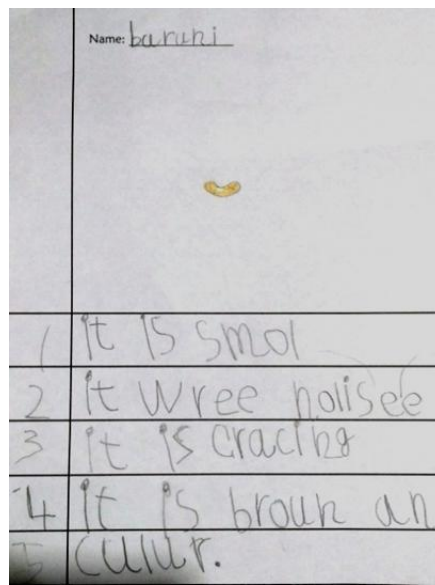
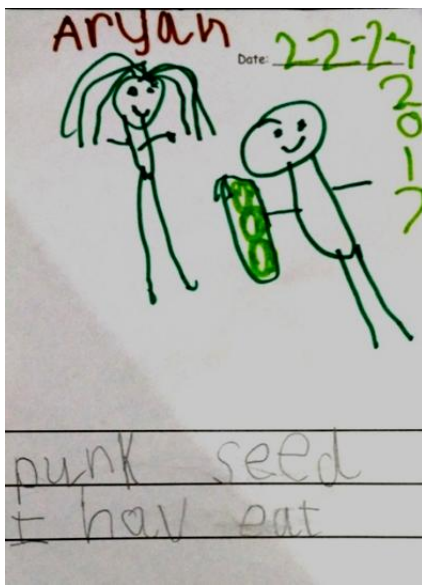
Helping each other read



Making connections



Independently recording my observations



Links to learning outcomes:

- **Children have a strong sense of identity**
 - Demonstrating dispositions such as curiosity and persistence
 - Experiencing learning opportunities that are based on what matters to them
- **Children are confident and involved learners**
 - Recognizing patterns and making connections and associations between new learning and what they already know
 - Using reading material for enjoyment and as a source of information
- **Children are effective communicators**
 - Using language with growing competence and confidence through asking questions, and giving and receiving information
 - Using colour, numbers, pictures and words to record information, and to make sense and communicate their own experiences
 - Using books to gain information and to broaden their understanding of the world.
- **Children are connected with and contribute to their world (community)**
 - Using play and inquiry to investigate and explore the natural world

Since many children mentioned flowers in the conversations around seeds, we set up an observation table with a variety of locally found flowers. This, too, led to some amazing moments of learning and discovery.



Taking it forward

- Incorporate more natural material into other learning centres and experiences - what observations/questions/wonderings might this bring up?
- Make use of our vibrant natural outdoor area for investigating and observing natural phenomena