**Description:** Students learn about the life cycle of the bigleaf maple seed which is found in a winged ‘samara’. They observe other different native plant seed types and discover the actual seeds in berries, capsules, nuts, seed-heads, samaras and cones. This activity is designed to be followed by the *Seeds of All Kinds Hunt* activity.

**Objectives:**
- Students understand that seeds come in many forms, sometimes not easily seen.
- Students study and sort many different seeds.

**Print Materials:**
- ‘How-to-do Activity: Seed Samples’
- Images: ‘Bigleaf Maple Seed Cycle’ poster, ‘Seeds of All Kinds’ poster, ‘Seeds of All Kinds Poster Overlay’
- Master: ‘Seeds of All Kinds’ graphic organizer, ‘Bigleaf Maple Seed Cycle’ drawing

**Kit Materials:**
- ‘Seed Samples’ (see ‘How-to-do Activity’)
- ‘Wheat Samples’: seedhead, groats, flakes, flour*- in individual baggies
- Copies of ‘Seeds of All Kinds’ graphic organizer
- Optional: Copies of ‘Bigleaf Maple Seed Cycle’ drawing: 1 per student

*Available in grocery stores

**Activity:**
- Gather in habitat area. State that, “Most plants reproduce by seeds. Reproduce means ‘to cause to sprout or develop offspring’.
- Show image of ‘Bigleaf Maple Seed Cycle’. Read from poster label and discuss the bigleaf maple seed cycle.
- Show ‘Seeds of all Kinds’ poster with a variety of seeds. “There are thousands of types of plants in the Pacific Northwest, and thousands of different kinds of seeds. These are some of the many types of native seeds from the Pacific Northwest”. Discuss and describe the differences in their characteristics (size, color, etc.) and types (pod, cone, nut, etc.)
- Discuss how seeds are very important, and not just for making new baby plants. They are important to animals, including humans, as food. “We love to eat seeds!” Explain. (Bread, peanut butter, cookies, popcorn, corn on the cob, peas, chocolate, vanilla, etc.) Show ‘Wheat Samples: seedhead, groats, flakes, flour’, which are used for cookies, cereal, muffins, pancakes and breads. Discuss examples of seeds that are food for people. Discuss how seeds are important for wildlife (many birds and small animals eat seeds).
- Divide students into 6 study groups. State that, “Some seeds are easy to see and others are harder.” (i.e., seedheads with clearly visible seeds versus ones that are inside a shell, fruit, cone, etc.) Point out a seed on the poster, or a sample, that is easy to see (grass, nuts), then ones that are harder to see (berries, pods).
- Pass out a set of ‘Seed Samples’ and a baggie of fresh berries to each of the six groups (each group should have five or more seed types) and ask students to point out the seeds. For example:
  - Fresh or dried berries- have students find the seeds inside the berry.
  - Cattail catkin- have students look for the tiny seeds and discuss how many seeds.
  - Douglas fir cone- look for the seeds under the bracts of the cone.
  - Oregon Ash samara- look for the seed inside the hull.
  - Hazelnut- show example of the seed inside the nut.
- Pass out ‘Seeds of all Kinds’ graphic organizer. Ask students to draw a picture of one of their seed samples in its correct box on the graphic organizer. Have them repeat the process for each of their seed samples.
- Summarize: Seeds come in many different forms, and can be of all sizes and shapes. Some seeds are hidden and some seeds are not. Seeds are important food for people and wildlife.
- Optional: Students can color in the ‘Bigleaf Maple Seed Cycle’ drawing.

**Extension:** Place a fresh closed cone (fir, pine, etc.) in a paper bag. Place in a warm spot and observe how many seeds are released.