

How do plants drink?

Setting the context

Mike and Mary are staying at their grandma's house. While they are having their breakfast, she carries one of her favourite plants towards the sink and says, 'I'm just going to give it a drink of water.' The twins find this funny because they

know plants can't drink like they do, but their grandma says, 'I can show you how plants have a drink – just come with me...'

The problem

Can you actually see plants 'drinking'?

Objectives

To know how to conduct a 'fair' experiment, observe closely what is happening and keep appropriate records.

To learn that plants need water to stay healthy.

To understand what plants require in order to grow and stay healthy.

You will need

Three white carnations and a stick of celery for each group; five containers to hold water for the plants; red and blue food colouring; a copy of photocopiable page 34 for each group.

Preparation

It will be useful if the children know what happens if plants are not watered. Grow some cress on the window sill and water some containers and not the others. Make sure there is space on the same windowsill for all the containers that will hold the carnations. Mix up the food colouring with water. Make sure you have enough for each container.

Discussion and research

- Tell the children about Mike and Mary's

grandma giving her favourite plant a drink.

- Talk about the cress that has been watered and the differences they can see in the cress that has not had any water.
- Talk about how they think plants 'drink' water and where they get it from.
- Make sure that they understand that plants take in the water (sucked in through their **roots**) and that this water goes right

