Most plants make seeds. A seed contains the beginning of a new plant. Seeds are different shapes, sizes, and colors. All seeds grow into the same kind of plant that made them.

Many plants grow flowers. Flowers are where most seeds begin.

A flower is made up of many parts.

**In the center of the flower is the PISTIL.**

**The sticky part at the top of the pistil is the STIGMA.**

**The parts of the flower around the pistil are the STAMENS.**

**Stamens make yellow powder called POLLEN.**

**At the bottom of the pistil are tiny egg cells called OVULES.**

Before a seed can begin to grow, a **grain** of pollen from the stamen must land on the stigma at the top of the pistil of a flower like itself. This is called pollination.

Pollination happens in different ways. Often, wind blows pollen from flower to flower.

Bees, other insects and hummingbirds help pollinate, too. While they visit flowers for their sweet juice, called nectar, pollen rubs onto their bodies. Then they carry the pollen to another flower where it comes off onto its pistil.

If a pollen grain from a flower lands on the pistil of the same kind of flower, it grows a long tube through the pistil into an ovule. This is the beginning of a seed.

The seeds grow inside the flower, even as the flower begins to die. As the seeds become bigger, a fruit or **pod** grows around them. The fruit or pod protects the seeds.

When the fruit or pod ripens, it breaks open. The seeds are ready to become new plants.

Some seeds fall to the ground around the base of the plant where they will grow. Some pods or fruits open and the seeds pop out. Sometimes, when birds eat berries, they drop the seeds.

Other seeds fall into streams, ponds, rivers, or the ocean. There, they travel on the water until they stick to dirt along a shore.

The wind scatters seeds. Some seeds have fluff on them that lets them float to the ground like tiny parachutes. Others have wings that spin as they fall.

Animals help scatter seeds, too. They hide acorns and nuts in the ground. Some seeds have hooks that stick to the fur of animals or people’s clothes. Later, they drop off onto the ground.

A flower bed or vegetable garden is beautiful! Seeds are planted to grow in the gardens. The seeds come in small envelopes or boxes. Directions explain how to plant the seeds and care for the plants.

The beginning of a plant is curled up inside each seed. Food is stored inside the seed,
A seed will not sprout until certain things happen. First it must be on or in the soil. Then it needs rain to soak the seed and soften its seed coat.

When the sun shines and warms the ground, the seed coat breaks open and the seed begins to grow. This is called germination. A root grows down into the soil. The root takes in water and minerals from the soil for food.

Up grows a shoot. Green leaves grow up from the shoot toward the sun. The plant grows bigger and bigger. The leaves make food for the plant from the water and minerals in the soil, the sunlight, and the air all around the plant.

Finally, the plant is full-grown. Buds on the plant open into flowers where new seeds will grow.

Many of the foods people eat are seeds, fruits, and pods. They are full of nutrition, vitamins and minerals and...they are tasty, too!