

## Romans: introducing non-native food plants – KS2

### The impact of Roman empire on the flora of Europe

**Aim:** To understand the impact of travel and the occupation of Europe on plant distribution.

As the Roman empire expanded, plants came too... and rabbits! Vegetables (turnip, celery, carrot) and fruits, (cherries, grapes and plums) were often deliberately brought to northern Europe. Other plants 'hitched a ride' and arrived through imported grains, on clothes etc, and became established as weeds in our fields and hedgerows.

Botanists describe plants introduced to Britain before 1500AD and now found growing in natural habitats, as *archaeophytes*.

#### Resources:

- Internet research
- Local examples of non-native introduced plants

#### Activity springboards:

- Pupils research plants introduced by the Romans. e.g. fennel, which is used in cookery, as a herbal tea, in toothpaste, and used as a breath freshener and digestive aid.
- Research plants that 'hitched a ride' and are now considered weeds.
- Find local examples of useful introduced plants and/or grow some, such as fennel, celery and carrot.
- Plant cherry and plum trees in the school grounds, (if these are not already present) as a legacy for future pupils studying the Romans.

#### Key vocabulary:

archaeophytes, indigenous

#### Success criteria:

- ✓ I understand and can explain why some plants are not indigenous to the UK and explain how they arrived

## Egyptians: mummification – KS2

### Be an 'embalmer' – mummify a tomato

**Aim:** To understand the use of lichen in the process of mummification

Lichens were used in the ancient Egyptian process of mummification. They were placed inside bodies as a filler. Use the library or the internet to find out more.

#### Resources:

- Tomatoes
- Salt
- Bicarbonate of soda
- Lichen, sawdust
- Cotton bandages

#### Activity:

Use lichen in the process of mummifying a tomato. Examples on how to do this are online

- The tomatoes are first 'eviscerated' (remove 'guts' by scooping out seeds/pulp)
- Desiccate with a salt/bicarb mix, (weigh the tomato before and after)
- Check progress in 2 weeks and re-salt as required.
- Weight the resulting dried tomatoes, compare results.
- After desiccation the cavity can be filled with lichen (compare with other fillers, such as sawdust) and wrap in bandages.



Mummify a tomato

**Key vocabulary:** desiccation, evisceration, mummification

#### Success criteria:

- ✓ I can describe the process of mummification
- ✓ I understand why Pharaohs were mummified

