

## What to do

1. Beforehand, prepare the trays. For the spring tray, spread dirt on a tray, sprinkle it with grass seed and water the seeds. It will take a few days for the grass to grow. For the winter tray, freeze water in a tray. To make the fall tray, collect dried leaves, crush them and put them on a tray. For the summer tray, spread sand on the last tray and add a shallow bowl of water for a beach area. Add to the trays any other seasonal items, such as flowers, a plastic snowman or evergreen tree, a pumpkin and seashells.
2. Divide the science table into four parts using masking tape. Label each section with a season. For very young children, add pictures to depict the seasons. Place the trays on the appropriate section. Encourage the children to touch and handle the materials in the trays.
3. Use this hands-on approach to help children distinguish and interact with the seasons.

## More to do

**Games:** Once the children can distinguish between the seasons, mix up the picture/word cards, and play a season identification game.

**More science:** Put the trays on the floor and let the children explore the sense of touch by feeling the contents of the trays with their bare feet.

Patricia Moeser, McFarland, WI

3+

## The Year-Round Pumpkin

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### Science skills

Children use all their senses to observe changes, and they are encouraged to ask questions about nature.

## Materials

Ripe pumpkin  
Carving tools  
Garden area

## What to do

1. Bring a pumpkin into the classroom.
2. Let children observe and explore it. How big around is it? Is it heavy? Are there any bumps or bruises?
3. Carve the pumpkin into a jack-o'-lantern and save the seeds.
4. Let the children explore the jack-o'-lantern by looking at the insides, at the pulp and by smelling and touching it.
5. Leave the jack-o'-lantern in the classroom for a few days. After Halloween is over, tell the children you will put the jack-o'-lantern out in the garden and they can watch what happens to it. Introduce the idea of decomposition, and observe the changes at regular intervals. Have any animals nibbled it? What color is it now? Is it still round?

# Seasons

6. By springtime most of the pumpkin will have decomposed. Discuss the fact that the pumpkin has become part of the soil and will now help the garden grow. Occasionally a seed that remained in the pumpkin will plant itself and grow!

## More to do

**Math:** Estimate and then count how many seeds were in the pumpkin.

**More science:** Allow some seeds to air dry completely and save them to plant in the garden in the spring.

**Snack:** Wash and roast the pumpkin seeds for a snack.

## Related books

*Pumpkin, Pumpkin* by Jeanne Titherington

*The Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree* by Gail Gibbons

Sarah Dill, Madison, WI

## Creating the Four Seasons

4+

### Science skills

*As children illustrate the four seasons, they practice observation skills and use fine motor skills.*

### Materials

Poster board in blue, yellow, orange and green  
Old greeting cards  
Glue  
Blue construction paper  
Felt markers  
Seasonal stickers  
Paints

Old magazines  
Scissors  
Large coffee can  
Rulers  
Crayons  
White paper

### What to do

1. Make and display posters depicting the four seasons. The class can make these easily from poster board, blue for winter, yellow for summer, orange for autumn and green for spring (or let the children decide which color will make a good background for each season). Cut pictures from old magazines or greeting cards to paste on the poster boards or let the children color pictures depicting various "seasonal" activities and celebrations. You can make attractive edges for your posters from wallpaper sample books or construction paper. The posters make a wonderful group project for the class.
2. Using a large coffee can or something similar in diameter, pre-cut large circles from blue construction paper. With rulers and black felt markers, show the children how to mark off four sections on the circle. The children can use the crayons or markers to illustrate one season in each section any way they wish, or let them put stickers of the four seasons in each labeled section. Also, you can cut circle shapes from white paper and divide them, as above,