



[Excite Your Students about Gardening by Growing a TickleMe Plant!](#)

Introduction: TickleMe Plants (*Mimosa pudica*) are wonderful plants to help excite kids about gardening, plants, nature and science. Teachers K-Graduate School use TickleMe Plants as part of their curriculum because TickleMe Plants are the only plants that will lower their branches and close their leaves when they are tickled, windblown, cold or placed in the dark. Use a TickleMe Plant when studying plants, life science or ecology and add more excitement to your lessons. The first day that students see their plants move, you will hear exclamations of joy and see smiles of disbelief on the students' faces. Kids never forget this growing experience and our teachers have found many of their students to become more sensitive to the needs of living things. Many students and teachers have told us that wherever they go in forest, field, tropics or botanical gardens, they now search for TickleMe Plants.

Lesson - A Controlled Study– What is the Effect of a Variable on the Germination of TickleMe Plant Seeds?

Have your students select one variable to study. Variables can be a change in: temperature, amount of water added, or type of soil, etc. Students can set up an experimental group of seeds or plants and apply a variable to that group. The other group is called the control group and to this group no variable is applied to these seeds or plants. The following is an example of an interesting controlled study.

What is the Effect on the Germination of TickleMe Plant Seeds When the Seeds are Placed in Boiling Water?

The Experimental Group- Half of the seeds to be used are placed in a cup of boiling water (with adult supervision) and allowed to soak in that water as the water cools over the next 24 hours.

The Control Group- The other half of the seeds are planted directly in the soil without previously soaking them.

Most students hypothesize that the germination rate will be almost zero with the seeds that were placed in the boiling water (the experimental group), as compared to the seeds that were not soaked (the control group). Much to their surprise, the boiling water actually increases the rate of TickleMe Plant seed germination. This might be because the boiling water helps to soften the hard seed coat, which then allows the plant to sprout more easily.

Lesson Two- Can you make your TickleMe Plant go to “Sleep”?

The TickleMe Plant will open its leaves when the sun rises and close its leaves when the sun sets. Have students design an experiment to see if TickleMe Plants will go to “sleep”, if they are placed under a cooking pot or other object that will keep the plant in a very dark environment.

Resources:

The TickleMe Plant Book, with over 20 experiment/lesson plan ideas, additional information, videos and supplies can be found at www.ticklemeplant.com

Teachers who have any additional curriculum or growing questions can contact me directly at mark@ticklemeplant.com Happy Growing- Mark Chipkin- Educational Project Director

Eden Farm, 60 Hurds Corner Road, Pawling, New York, 12564 | Ph (845) 350-4800

www.TickleMePlant.com