

Acid attack

Concept—Acid rain

CURRICULUM LINK:

Geography Curriculum and Science Curriculum—Environmental Awareness and Care strand
Energy books—*Energy Resources in Ireland*, page 9

Experiment

You will need:

- Two jam jar lids
- Cotton wool
- Bean or wheat seeds
- Lemon juice

1. Place five seeds on a layer of moist cotton wool in each lid.
2. Label one lid 'acid rain'.
3. Water the cotton wool in both lids to stop the seeds from drying out.
4. Each day squeeze a few drops of lemon juice onto the seeds in the 'acid rain' lid.
5. Watch the seeds for a few days.

Lemon juice is a weak acid, representing acid rain. Acid rain occurs when large amounts of gases such as sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide are released into the air. Power stations, factories and car exhausts produce these gases. These gases dissolve in water vapour in the air and fall to the ground as acid rain. Acid rain destroys forests, pollutes lakes and corrodes buildings and statues.

Do more:

To see how acid affects buildings try this simple experiment: find a small piece of cement on a path or at the bottom of a brick wall; put the piece of cement in a glass and pour vinegar over the top; leave the piece of cement soaking in vinegar for a few days and see what happens.

