

Playstage

Junior

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PAY ATTENTION 007!



A light hearted look at a “Power of Plants” spy school



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PAY ATTENTION 007!**CAST LIST****Q - (Head of training and experiments)****NUMBERS ONE to SIX (Research assistants)****007****Acorn****Sunflower Seed****Tomato****Wheat Kernel****Young Plants (6)****Ragweed****Poison Ivy****Nettle****Blackberry****Marigold****Runner bean****Nasturtium****Cabbage****Artemisia****Carrot****Geranium****Sweetcorn****Aconite****Castor Bean****Hemlock****Foxglove***33 parts (mostly speaking), could easily be more, or less with doubling.**Running time approximately 30 minutes.*

MUSIC

With this play we are suggesting that you make great use of music as introductions and background for the movement and actions and we recommend some YouTube tracks that can be used in rehearsal and performance.

1/ THE JAMES BOND THEME

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUC8dJ0D6sA>

2/ THEME FROM ROCKY

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PtvLTZS4Ik>

3/ POISON IVY (by the Coasters)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRfRITVdz4k>

4/ FLOWERS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCmjScjDpfk>

PAY ATTENTION 007!

The play is set in Q's laboratory (SEE PRODUCTION NOTES) and the action is continuous. The stage is empty. The JAMES BOND THEME plays, then fades out. Q, enters, surrounded by his Research Assistants. He is allocating jobs. The Research Assistants are all numbered not named. They are all wearing lab coats.

Q

So, Number One, I want you to be in charge of the seeds today.

(NUMBER ONE nods)

Number Two, I want you, when I give you the signal, to bring in the young plants to give a training demonstration.

(NUMBER TWO nods)

Number Three and Four, I think you both need to supervise the defensive plants. Don't forget your rubber gloves. We don't want any accidents.

(NUMBERS THREE and FOUR nod)

Number Five, I want you to be responsible for the bodyguard plants.

(NUMBER FIVE and SIX nod)

NUMBER SIX

Yes, Q. Er...what about the...special plants?

Q

We will *all* deal with them, when the time comes. It's much too risky for any one person to cope with them on their own. However, we will have to display them. M has instructed that 007 must know about our special programme before he goes back out into the field. As you know, 007 is not the brightest of our double 0 agents, but he does get the best results. So, we must make sure that he completely understands the programme before he goes on another assignment. That's all! Off you go and prepare. I will call for you.

(JAMES BOND THEME plays again, briefly, and 007 enters, wearing a tuxedo.)

Q

Ah! There you are, 007! Punctual as usual.

007

What's all this about, Q? Money Penny told me that you are running some new top-secret training programme and I was to report to you at once. You do know that I am a fully trained agent and have absolutely no need of any further training?

Q

No-one ever finishes training, 007. You should know that. But, in this instance, it is not *your* training we are concerned with. We have a whole new programme called The Power of Plants.

007 (*confused*)

Plants? As in, things that grow in the ground? Have you gone mad, Q?

Q

Oh, don't ever underestimate the power of plants, 007! I can see that your education has been severely lacking!

007

Yes, well, I can't say that I know much about plants, Q. If I'm honest, I would say that I don't ever think about them at all.

Q

Disgraceful! Apart from the fact that you eat them, and they provide you with medicine, we would all be dead without plants, because they provide us with oxygen!

007

They do?

Q

I can see why M insisted that you came on this course. (*calling offstage*) Number One! Bring in the Plants 101 chart please?

(NUMBER ONE enters, wheeling a display board which has a large illustration of a plant pinned to it. (And three underneath – SEE PRODUCTION NOTES) He points

to various parts of the illustration as he explains. Meanwhile, NUMBER TWO enters with a tall stool, which he places by 007, who sits on it. NUMBER TWO exits.)

Q

Now pay attention, 007.

NUMBER ONE

These are all the component parts of a plant. We'll start from the bottom here. This is the root system, which develops as the plant grows. The roots – there's a main taproot and then lateral roots off the side – draw up nourishment from the soil, various minerals and so on, and water that filters down through the soil.

007

Yes, I think I knew that much about plants...

Q

Don't interrupt 007!

NUMBER ONE

Arising out of the roots are the stems. Their purpose is to carry the nutrients and water upwards to the other parts of the plant. It's quite clever really. Acts like a straw, sucking up everything. Up the stem are nodes, small areas where the growth of the plant bursts through to create other stems or branches. Again, these are food and water carriers. To create more nourishment, the plant grows leaves out of these side branches.

007

Sorry, but how does growing more of the plant create more food? I would have thought the leaves would use up all the food coming from the soil?

Q

Good question 007! Glad to see you are paying attention!

NUMBER ONE (*flipping to next illustration of Photosynthesis*)

Plants also make food by interacting with the sun and, for this, they need flat surfaces, like solar panels, to turn towards the sun and soak up the rays. Then the

leaves also have microscopic pores, like human skin, that breathe in all the bad carbon dioxide that humans don't like. The plant feeds on the warmth and light from the sun and the carbon dioxide and then they convert what they don't use for themselves into oxygen and expel it into the air.

007

Gosh! So, plants are the good guys?

Q

Well...not *all* plants are on our side...

007

You don't mean to say that some of them work for SPECTRE?

Q

Not exactly. We'll come to that later in the training.

NUMBER ONE (*flipping to picture of Pollination*)

So, the next part of this cycle is that the well-nourished plants grow buds and then flowers, the flowers are then fertilised by bees moving the pollen from plant to plant. This creates more seeds in the flower or, with some plants, seeds on the fruit.

Q

Yes. Plants wouldn't survive at all without the bees. Remember that 007.

007

Yes, Q. Bees are very important. Got it.

NUMBER ONE

Then they shed their seeds on to the ground and the whole process starts again. (*He flips over the picture to show a Life Cycle of Plants illustration*) Of course, not all plants produce flowers or fruit. Some are edible roots, like potatoes and carrots. Some are just leaves. Not all the same.

007

OK. Well that seems pretty simple. Is that it? Can I go now?

Q

Good gracious, 007! That was just an introduction to the programme. Now you get to meet the various recruits and talk to them.

007

Oh, what like give them a pep-talk? Tell them about some of my more stunning successes in the field?

Q

Number One, you can go and fetch the seeds now. 007, I very much doubt if anything you can do in the field is anywhere near as spectacular as what our latest recruits can achieve.

(NUMBER ONE enters with the SEEDS of all shapes and sizes – SEE PRODUCTION NOTES) They all stand in a line, like army recruits.)

NUMBER ONE

Recruits! When I tap you on the shoulder, please step forward and state your name, plant and dimensions!

One! *(the ACORN steps forward)*

ACORN *(stamping feet and saluting)*

Acorn, sir! Scientific name Genus Quercus. Type of plant – tree. Can grow up to forty metres in height and have a trunk circumference of 12 metres.

(ACORN stamps, salutes and steps back in line. NUMBER ONE flips over the chart on the board to show a picture of an oak tree.)

007

Whoah! That small chap can grow into a huge tree?

NUMBER ONE

Yes. It may take seventy five years to reach full height however.

007

And what are this agent's special skills?

Q

Incredibly tough, 007. Oak wood was used for Viking longships, Medieval warships, barrels, furniture. The bark of some oaks is medicinal, other barks produce cork, acorns can provide human and animal food. Endless talents, 007, endless.

NUMBER ONE

Two!

(A SUNFLOWER SEED steps forward, stamps and salutes.)

SUNFLOWER SEED

Sunflower seed, sir! Genus Helianthus. Type of plant – flower. Can grow to 5 metres high and the flower head, which is packed with seeds, can grow to half a metre in diameter.

(SUNFLOWER SEED stamps, salutes and steps back into line. NUMBER ONE flips over the display to show a field of sunflowers.)

Q

Special skills are the seeds are eaten by birds, animals and humans, the oil from the crushed seeds is used for cooking and manufacturing paints and cosmetics. The dried stems have been used to make paper, fabric or linings for wooden containers. Also used for fuel and fertilizer.

007

Awesome!

NUMBER ONE

Three!

(A TOMATO steps forward, stamps and salutes.)

TOMATO

Tomato fruit, full of seeds, sir! Enough seeds in me to grow Tomato fruit, full of seeds, sir! Enough seeds in me to grow 30 tomato plants. Scientific name Solanum lycopersicum, part of the nightshade family...

007

Nightshade!? Isn't that poisonous?

(NUMBER ONE flips over the page to show a picture of tomato plants laden with fruit.)

NUMBER ONE

Some plants in that family are poisonous 007, but not the tomato. This fruit – please note that it is not a vegetable – is the major dietary source of the antioxidant lycopene, which has been linked to many health benefits. Tomatoes are also a great source of vitamin C, potassium, folate, and vitamin K.

007

Splendid. Love a nice tomato.

(TOMATO stamps, salutes and steps back into line.)

NUMBER ONE

Four.

(WHEAT KERNEL steps forward, stamps feet, salutes.)

WHEAT KERNEL

Wheat kernel, sir!

007

What!? Wait! This recruit is a colonel already? It took me years to become a commander!

Q

Wheat kernel – spelt k – e – r – n – e – l. Nothing to do with military rank. Carry on!

WHEAT KERNEL

Scientific name: Genus Triticum. Actually, a giant family of grasses. There are non-edible grasses and edible grasses.

NUMBER ONE (*Flips over to image of field of wheat*)

Wheat is the number one source of vegetable protein in human food. Each year approximately 750 million tons of wheat is grown and harvested in the world. Some species of wheat can grow up to 2.5 metres tall. It has been grown by humans as food since around 9000 years BCE.

(*WHEAT KERNEL stamps feet, salutes and steps back in line.*)

Q

Thank you Number One. You can take our new recruits away now.

NUMBER ONE

Yes sir! About turn! By the left, quick march!

(*NUMBER ONE and the SEEDS march offstage.*)

Q

Excellent batch of recruits, 007. Outstanding potential. Main thing is though, we have to look after those bees. Jolly important the bees. Now, I want to show you the next phase of the programme. The training. (*calling offstage*) Number Two, could you bring in your section now, please!

(*The theme from ROCKY plays, as the YOUNG PLANTS come in bouncing and shadow boxing, like prize fighters in training. Music fades as they line up in front of*

Q and facing the audience. Music fades. SEE PRODUCTION NOTES. NUMBER TWO enters with a large (empty) watering can and a basket of sunglasses.)

NUMBER TWO

Here are some of our best recruits, sir. The ones that have made it to the eight-leaf stage. These plants, starting from a seed, have sprouted and pushed their way up through the extremely heavy earth and despite everything that our weather machines have thrown at them, they have grown strong and healthy with thick stems and glossy leaves.

007

What's their training programme, Q?

Q

Eight hours at least of sunshine...

(NUMBER TWO goes along the line with sunglasses and each PLANT puts a pair on)

Q

...then occasional waterings to keep them moist...

(NUMBER TWO goes back down the line, miming watering the feet of all the PLANTS.)

Q

...and we've now reached the stage where we are feeding them once a fortnight with special nutrients.

(NUMBER TWO gives each PLANT a pill (sweet), which they put in their mouths and chew.)