PULL-OUT ACTIVITY SECTION

THE LAB

Eight pages of things to make and do

TOP TIP

To make vegetarian jelly, swap gelatin for a product called agar-agar, which is made from seaweed.

Kitchen chemistry

Make spooky jellies

Learn about a strange substance that turns liquid into wobbly solids.

What you need

To make 6 small jellies:

- 4 gelatin leaves
- 4 bowls
- 30g blueberries
- 30g blackberries
- 30g oranges
- Sieve
- Spoon
- 250ml hot water
- Measuring jug
- Spooky Halloween jelly moulds, greased with oil

Instructions

1 Put the gelatin leaves into a bowl of cold water and soak for 5–10 minutes. Wash the fruit.

2 Make three purées by pressing each of the fruits through a sieve using a spoon. Use a separate bowl for each fruit purée.

3 Pour 250ml hot water (not boiling) into a measuring jug. Remove the gelatin leaves from the bowl of cold water and squeeze out excess water with your hands. Add the gelatin to the hot water and stir until it dissolves.

4 Divide the gelatin water equally between the three bowls of fruit purée. Stir each, then pour the mixtures into the jelly moulds. Keep them in the fridge overnight. Once set, turn out onto a plate and enjoy!

Soak the gelatin in cold water first.

How does it work?

Gelatin is a curious chemical that turns liquids into solids. It has no taste itself, and is used a "gelling agent" to thicken up and set all kinds of food. At room temperature, gelatin is solid, but heat it up and it becomes a liquid, mixing easily with other fluids. Soaking the dry sheets in cold water softens and rehydrates them, before stirring them into hot water. The heat causes long strings of proteins (important chemicals for building and running the body) to unravel. As the mix cools in the fridge, the protein fibres stick to each other once again and the jelly sets.

Send pictures of your creepy jelly creations to scienceandnature@dennis.co.uk