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News to Choice:

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Book

BfK Rating:

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These books reveal their information in some unexpected and imaginative ways. Using the simple device of illustrated transparent sheets between the pages, they show much that would take many words to tell. Brief texts are combined with glowing illustration and subtle design to produce a deceptively simple result. The opening pages of **The Tree**, for example, show the inside and outside of a conker. This then falls to the ground and starts to grow. Lift the 'grass' and you will see not just the root and shoot developing but the way the conker shrinks into the ground as it nourishes the new growth.

Throughout the series, the text avoids technical terms and concentrates on an outline of each subject. It also provides clues to the information in the illustrations. These do much more than accompany the text - they bring facts to life. In **Weather**, by turning the transparent sheets, you can change the direction of the wind or move the raincloud to another place. The fog and snow move too - just like real weather. A double spread from *The Egg*.

The format is particularly well-suited to certain subjects. In **The Egg**, it is used successfully to show eggs inside a hen, eggs in the hen's nest, and the developing chicken inside an egg. Cats is a less obvious choice for this technique and the result is attractive but less relevant to the main facts.

The Ladybird shows the structure of the insect and its lifestyle. One page shows the number of greenfly a ladybird can eat in one day. Move the page, and you can feed another ladybird. Food of a different kind is shown in **Fruit** which is mainly concerned with the inside and outside of popular fruits.

The series was originally published in French. This is not apparent from the text but can occasionally be seen in tiny details such as the labels on products in **Vegetables** (e.g. 'carottes'). The books are well constructed with ring-bound pages covered by an outer spine. The ingenious presentation combines the discovery of new information with the pleasure of unusual but apt effects.

Running Order:

24

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Links:

- [1] <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/the-tree>
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