A NUT CASE

Wanna bet you can toast a marshmallow with a nut?

THE SETUP

When you consider the high price of oil, you might not think it grows on trees. Surprise, it does! This is a nutty trick, but we are not crazy when we suggest burning a Brazil nut. Nuts contain oil, and a single, shelled Brazil nut burns long enough to toast several marshmallows. Since this trick involves fire, have an adult present before you begin. Stick a Brazil nut on the triangular, pointed end of a metal can opener and place it in the center of a pan. Light a long candle or a fireplace match and hold it under the nut until it begins to burn, then extinguish the candle or match. Wait until the nut is burning steadily before you toast your marshmallow.

INSIDER INFORMATION

Brazil nuts are large seeds that are sixty-seven percent oil. Brazil nut trees use the energy of sunlight to manufacture oil. The oil is a source of stored chemical energy that can be released later. The Brazil nut seedling uses this energy to grow. When you eat a Brazil nut, your body uses this energy. You can also release the energy stored in oil by burning it. So the light energy of the sun can be transformed into energy used by living things or into the heat and light of fire. Brazil nuts are not the only oily nuts. You might want to try toasting marshmallows with a walnut, a cashew, or even a macadamia nut. Unlike petroleum, nut oils are a renewable resource. Theoretically, there could be peanut-powered cars in our future.