



Wild things!

'Environmental education
in action'

Stay Wild At Home with

Wild things!

Flower Fun

#staywildathome

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What Are Flowers?



Flowers, sometimes referred to as blooms, or blossoms, are the reproductive parts of plants. Scientists think that the first flowers bloomed around 180 million years ago,

using insects and other animals to help them reproduce. That's why most flowers are brightly coloured and filled with nectar – these qualities make them a tempting and easy to find treat for bees and many other insects and animals.

When an insect lands on a flower, some of the flower's pollen will become attached to it. The insect will then visit other flowers of the same

species, passing on the pollen and fertilising them. This process is essential to every flowering plant because it allows the plant to create fruit and seeds, enabling the next generation of plants to grow.

Plants and flowers are extremely important to the environment as they provide food and shelter for many living creatures, including humans. Think about the fruits and vegetables we eat, almost all of them come from flowering plants. Whether you enjoy apples and oranges, or tomatoes on your pizza, these are only possible thanks to the hard work of flowers and the animals and insects that pollinated them!





Activity 3: Flower Dissection

Whilst flowers are beautiful, there are many different parts to plants including:

Roots – the roots of a plant help to keep it in place. Roots actively explore the soil to find sources of nutrients and water. Many plants will also develop a relationship with fungi (mushrooms) that live in the soil. In these cases, plants exchange their sugars for nutrients from the fungi via their roots.

Stem – the water and the nutrients absorbed by the roots are carried to the other parts of the plant (shoots in the xylem and phloem) by the stem. A plant's stem supports the leaves, flowers and fruits and will grow to best position its leaves in sunlight.

The stem of a plant is responsible for creating new stems and branches from which leaves and flowers grow. To do this, stems have cells called meristems that create new living tissue. The stem also stores much of the plant's energy.

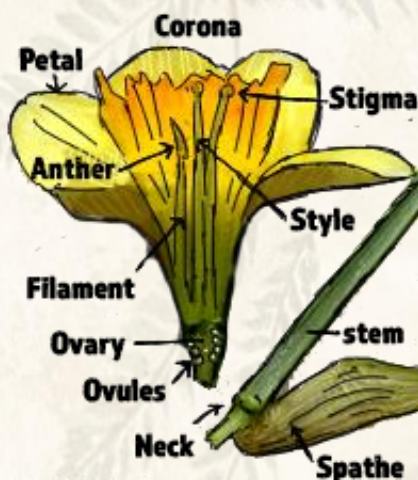
Leaves – leaves create sugars using sunlight in a process called photosynthesis. These sugars are the plant's food source, giving it energy to grow. Plants also use their leaves to absorb carbon-dioxide from the air, they turn the carbon into food and breath out oxygen, which is very useful for us!

There are lots of useful websites to visit that explain the parts of the plants.

Ask permission from parents/ guardians first or ask them to help you. **(caution some plant's sap may cause irritation. Wear gloves and wash your hands after handling)**

You will need:

- A daffodil
- Micro lens/magnifying glass (If you need a micro lens, we can send you one in the post, just visit our website to place an order.)
- Sharp knife
- Chopping board
- Paper
- Colouring pens/pencil



1. Examine the daffodil, you might want to write down what you see, is it symmetrical, how many petals does it have, what is the stem like there is lots to look at when you take a closer look.
2. Put your daffodil on the chopping board and cut through the middle of the flower and stem. Now examine the parts of the flower again using your hand lens or magnifying glass. Write down what you see.
3. Place the daffodil or create a botanical drawing on the paper and label the parts you have identified.



Activity 4: Planting Using Recycled Materials



There are lots of different ways to use recycling to help in the garden. Spring is the time to start planting, most seeds can be bought online. Try to choose seeds or plug plants from a local provider, that way your seeds/plants will stand the best chance as they are used to the weather and soil conditions of your area.

Plastic bottles and containers make excellent planters and mini greenhouses. Make sure that you write the name of the plant on something (old lollipop sticks are perfect) so that you remember what you have planted.

Plastic Bottle Planter

To make a planter from a used plastic bottle, first make sure its clean. Cut the bottle in half and fill the bottom with compost. Plant your seeds or plug plant and water lightly then place the top of the bottle back on with the lid removed so the air can circulate. Place on a sunny windowsill and water regularly (not too much as you don't want the roots to get too wet).

Alternatively cut the bottle in half put a small hole near where you cut and use some string to tie a loop so you can hang the bottle half up. Fill each one with compost, plant the seeds/flowers and hang on the fence.



Activity 5: Flower Crafts

1. **Draw or paint a still-life** of flowers in the garden, find your favorite flower and settle down with your art equipment. Study the flower and draw or paint what you see.
2. **Get crafty with your recycling** you can create pictures or sculptures of flowers. Cut up egg cartons make good daffodil heads, or cut the top off an empty bottle decorate and use as a vase to put your homemade flowers in. Used straws are good as stalks with tissue paper scrunched up and stuck on as flowers. The possibilities are endless.
3. **Leaf or flower bashing** can be done on paper or fabric (on old plain tea towel or pillowcase). Collect leaves/flowers or both and place them between the paper or fabric, hold in place then tap with something heavy either a hammer or a stone. The idea is to tap the flowers/leaves to release the dye not to smash them pieces! Once you can see the print coming through check you have got the whole leaf/flower before carefully peeling the paper or fabric back and removing the flower/leaf. You should be left with a lovely imprint of the flower or leaf you chose.



Garden Flower Field Guide



Daisy

Daisies are a flowering plant belonging to the Asteraceae family which currently includes 32,000 different species. Daisies are herbaceous plants that grow from 7 cm to a massive 1.2 meters in height depending on the species. They can grow in most conditions and don't mind being in full sun or the shade. The only continent daisies cannot be found on is Antarctica.

- Daisies are made up of lots of little flowers! The centre of a daisy is called the floral disc and is composed of many very small flowers that are tubular in shape. The outer flowers are called ray florets and look like other petals.
- The stalk of a daisy is usually longer than the leaves.
- There are around 4000 species of daisy, they vary in shape, size, and colours such as white with a yellow centre, pink with a yellow centre and yellow with a dark red centre.
- 'Daisy' comes from 'day's eye' - the name refers to the sun. They look like little suns and they also close in at night and open in the day.



Clover



Clovers are small herbaceous plants that grow worldwide but are mainly found in the Northern Hemisphere and they are part of the pea family. Clover produces a very small flower that is very fragrant, they can be pink, white, red or yellow. They usually have 3 leaves called trifoliate, you can get more leaves but the most common is 3. Bees particularly love the flowers which can make lovely clover honey. Livestock eat clover as it has lots of nutrients in, it is high in protein, calcium, and phosphorus.



- A young clover sprig is called a shamrock, a shamrock is used as a symbol of Ireland.
- It's said to be lucky if you find a four-leaf clover - each leaf is supposed to represent Faith, Love, Hope and Luck. There are about **5000** three leaf clovers to every **1** four leaf clover.
- There are around 300 species of clover, the most common in the UK is the white and red clover.
- Clovers can be annual, biannual and occasionally evergreen.
- It's said that if you find a four-leaf clover you will be able to see Faeries, this only happens if found when not looking for one....





Foxglove



Foxgloves are biannual or perennial plants that are common across the UK, they grow in gardens, woodlands, along the side of the road and hedgerows. Foxgloves produce a spike of flowers that are usually a purple/pink colour with darker spots inside the flower shape, these spikes can grow up to 2 meters tall. The foxglove flowers between June and September and its flowers are a valuable source of pollen for bees.

- The common carder bee is particularly attracted to the foxglove, once it lands on the flower it crawls up the inside of the flower then uses its long tongue to get the pollen.
- The foxglove is a poisonous plant but can also help to cure people - it's said that it can kill the living and raise the dead!
- Many local older names for the foxglove refer to faeries such as the faeries cap, thimble or glove.
- Folklore suggests that foxes would wear the flowers on their paws when hunting to help keep them silent.



Herb Robert



Herb Robert is an annual or biannual plant that is part of the geranium family, herb Robert grows in shady areas like woodland, hedgerows and rocky places and flowers spring to autumn. The flowers are pink and about 1cm across with 5 petals, the plant grows to about 30cm tall.

- The leaves of herb Robert have an unpleasant smell and is also called stinking Robert.
- There have been many uses for herb Robert such as a mosquito repellent or being used to treat nosebleeds and toothache.
- The herb Robert plant is highly regarded by Highlanders for its medicinal properties - its Gaelic name means 'plant for hives'.



Crocus



Crocus is from the iris family. They are perennials which are native to southern Europe and the Mediterranean and thrives in the UK. There are over 90 species of crocus and they can be found growing in fields, woodlands, gardens and grass verges. Like the daffodil the crocus signifies the start of spring. They are small plants that grow to no higher than 15cm. They flower in a variety of colours such as white, shades of purple, yellow and even striped.

- The crocus is a symbol of youthfulness and cheerfulness.
- Saffron (a spice) is harvested from the stigmas of the crocus sativus, saffron is the most expensive spice in the world!
- The crocus is sometimes called the light bulb flower, because before the crocus flower unfolds it looks like a light bulb.



Dandelion



Dandelions are evergreen plants that flower through spring and summer, the flower head is actually lots of little flowers grouped together these are bright yellow, when they go to seed each little flower turns into a seed which creates the fluffy looking seed head on the flower. They flower from March to October and are a good source of early pollen for a variety of insects. Flower heads range from about 2.5-5.5cm across they have a pinkish stem and green leaves.



- There are around 100 species of dandelion.
- Birds, insects and butterflies like nectar and seeds from the dandelion, the bullfinch especially likes the seeds of the dandelion.
- A dandelion seed can travel up to 5 miles in the wind.
- The root, leaves, and flowers can be used in medicine and foods as well as made into a dye.
- The dandelion represents the sun (yellow flower) the moon (seed head) and the stars (the individual seeds that blow away).

About Wild Things!

Wild Things! is an award-winning Scottish charity seeking to overcome educational, social and economic disadvantages through fostering a mutually beneficial relationship between communities and the natural world. Get involved and stay up to date via our website and social media:





wild-things.org.uk

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