Parts of a Flower

A Watercolor Field Guide for Young Naturalists



28 PRINTABLE PAGES · AGES 6 TO 8

Parts of a Flower

A Watercolor Field Guide for Young Naturalists

PUBLISHED BY

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How to Use This Packet

Parts of a Flower · Ages 6 to 8

There is no right order

Every page stands on its own, with one exception: pages 12 and 13 are a matched pair and are best done together, in that order. They ask two different questions that are very easily confused.

One page, one sitting

Each page is a single task. A child of six will usually spend ten to twenty minutes on one. If a page is finished in two minutes, it was the wrong page for today.

Take a real flower apart

This packet works best with a flower on the table. A buttercup, a wild geranium or a supermarket lily will do. Pages 6 to 10 are far easier to grasp with the real thing in front of you.

The answer key is at the back

Page 31. Every answer has been checked against a published source — the US Forest Service, USDA, Kew, the Smithsonian and university extension services.

Page 16 is the one to read carefully yourself. Most children's flower material says the pollen travels down inside the flower. It does not. The grain stays on the stigma and grows a tube down through the style — that is what the four-stage diagram shows.

What's Inside

The parts, pages 6 to 11

Labeling with a word bank and then without, the four rings of a flower, inside a stamen, inside a pistil, and why a stigma is sticky on purpose.

Two questions people mix up, pages 12 to 14

Complete or incomplete asks whether all four kinds of part are there. Perfect or imperfect asks whether both the male and female parts are there. They are not the same question.

Making a seed, pages 15 to 18

Pollination in four steps, the pollen tube drawn correctly, ovule to seed and ovary to fruit — and a sorting page of vegetables that are secretly fruits.

Flowers that break the rules, pages 19 to 22

A poppy that makes no nectar, a seed pod like a pepper pot, counting flower parts, and a sunflower that turns out to be hundreds of flowers.

Who comes to visit, pages 23 to 27

Stripes only a bee can see, a flower shaped for each visitor, night flowers, flowers with no petals at all, and five ways a seed travels.

Wrapping up, pages 28 to 31

Vocabulary with handwriting practice, a flower of your own to invent, a review page, and the answer key.

Print at 100 percent, or 'actual size'. Do not use 'fit to page'.

What Is a Flower For?

A flower is not a decoration. It is how a plant makes seeds. Everything about it has a job. The bright petals are an advertisement. The sweet nectar is a payment. The dusty pollen is the delivery. About three out of every four flowering plants need an animal to carry their pollen for them.





The advertisement



The payment

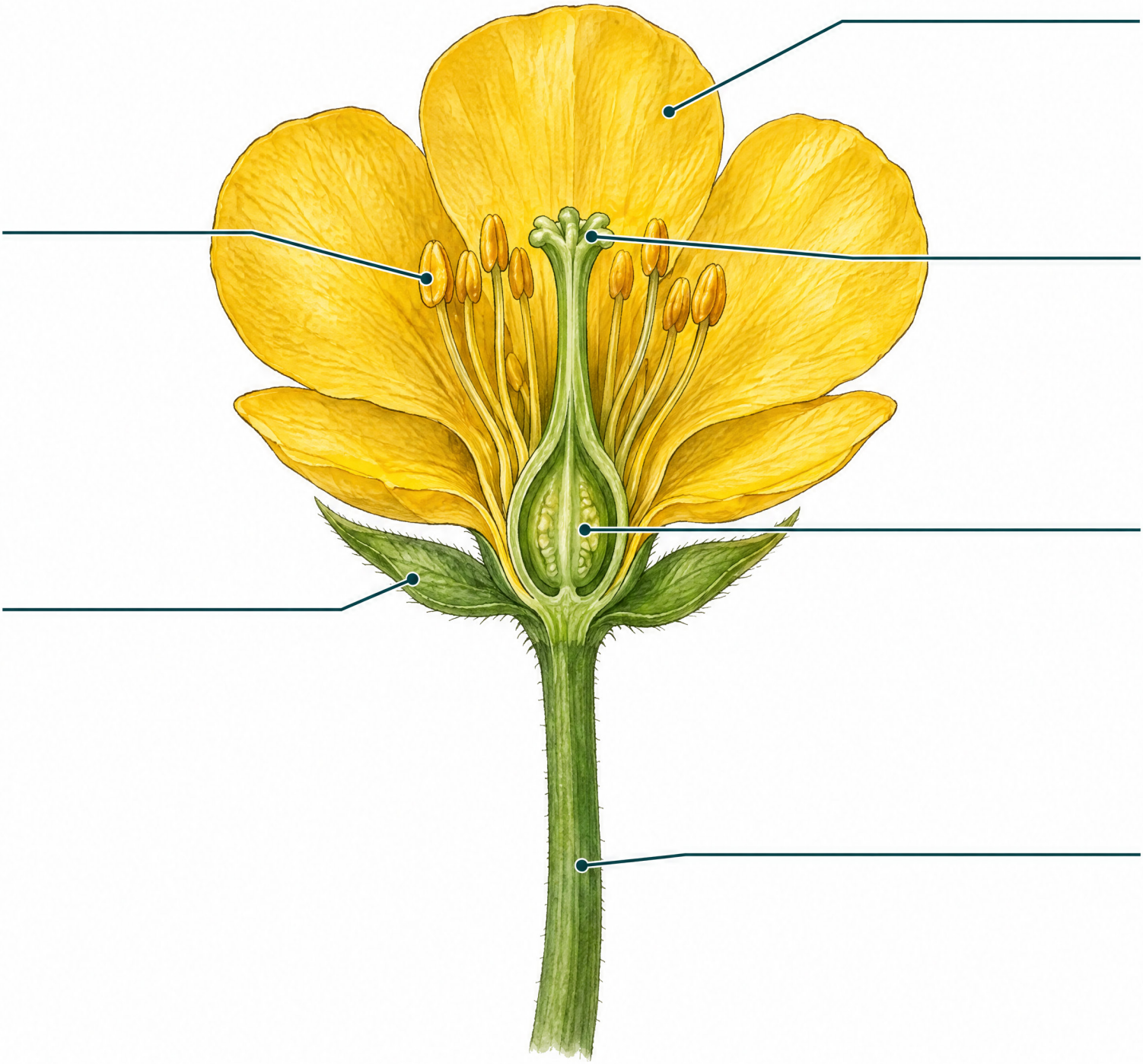


The delivery

Pollinators are behind about one in every three bites of food you eat.

Parts of a Flower

Use the word bank to label each part.



petal	sepal	stamen	pistil	ovary	stem

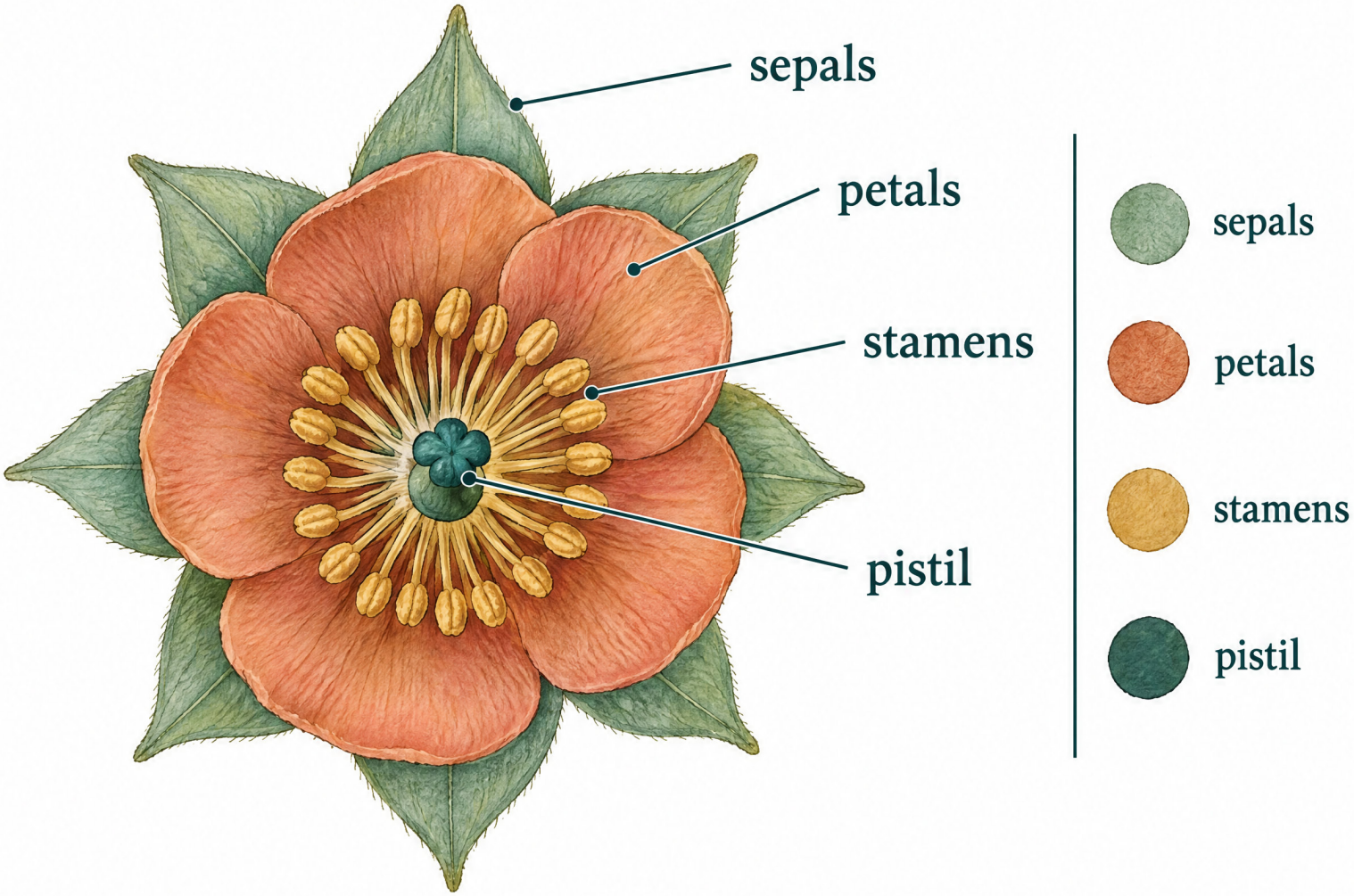
Parts of a Flower

Can you label it without the word bank this time?

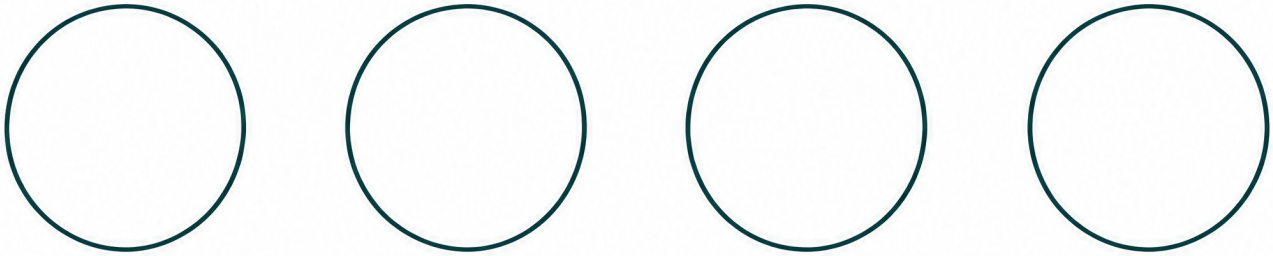


The Four Rings

A flower is built in four rings, one inside the next.

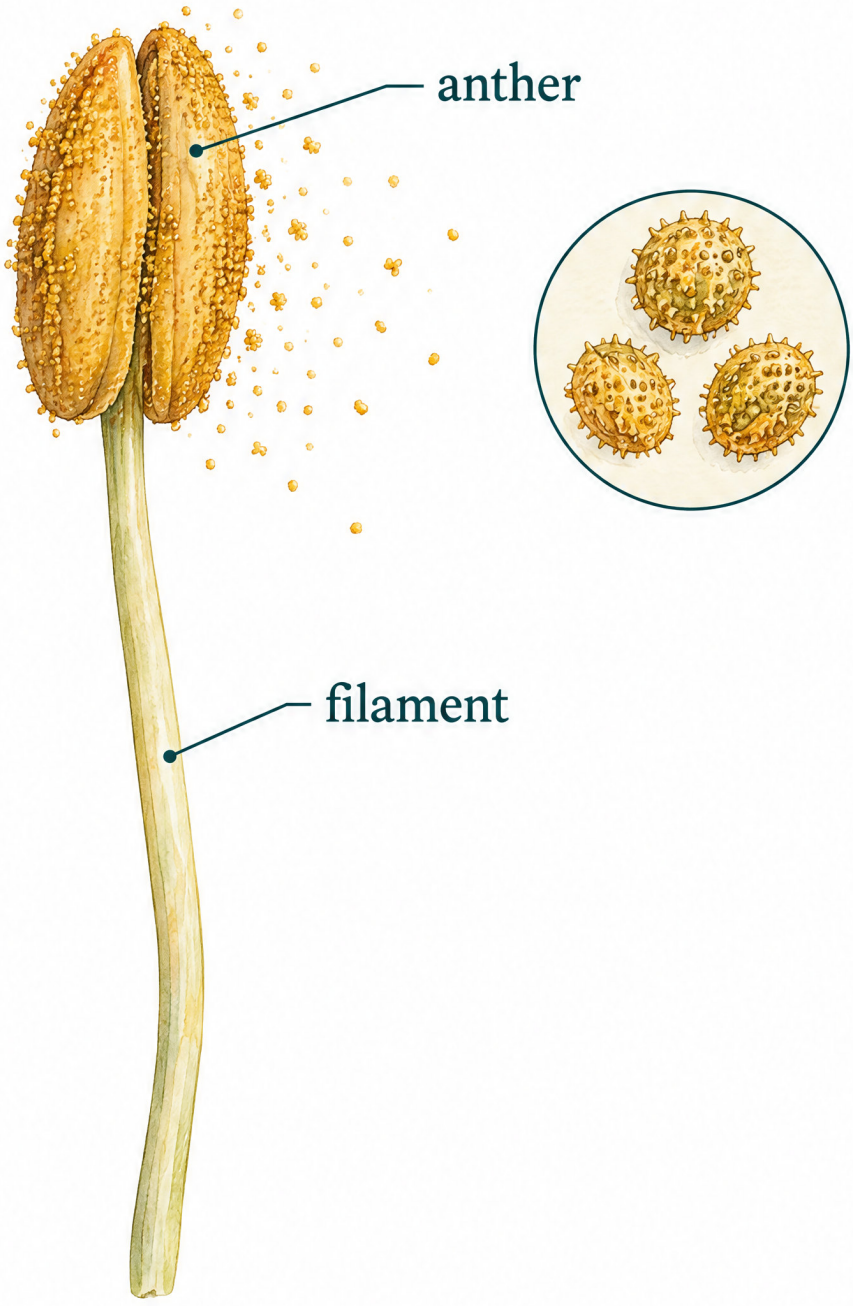


Color each ring a different color.



Inside a Stamen

The stamen is the part that makes pollen. It has two pieces. The anther is the little pouch at the top where the pollen is made. The filament is the thin stalk that holds the anther up high, so the pollen can be carried away.



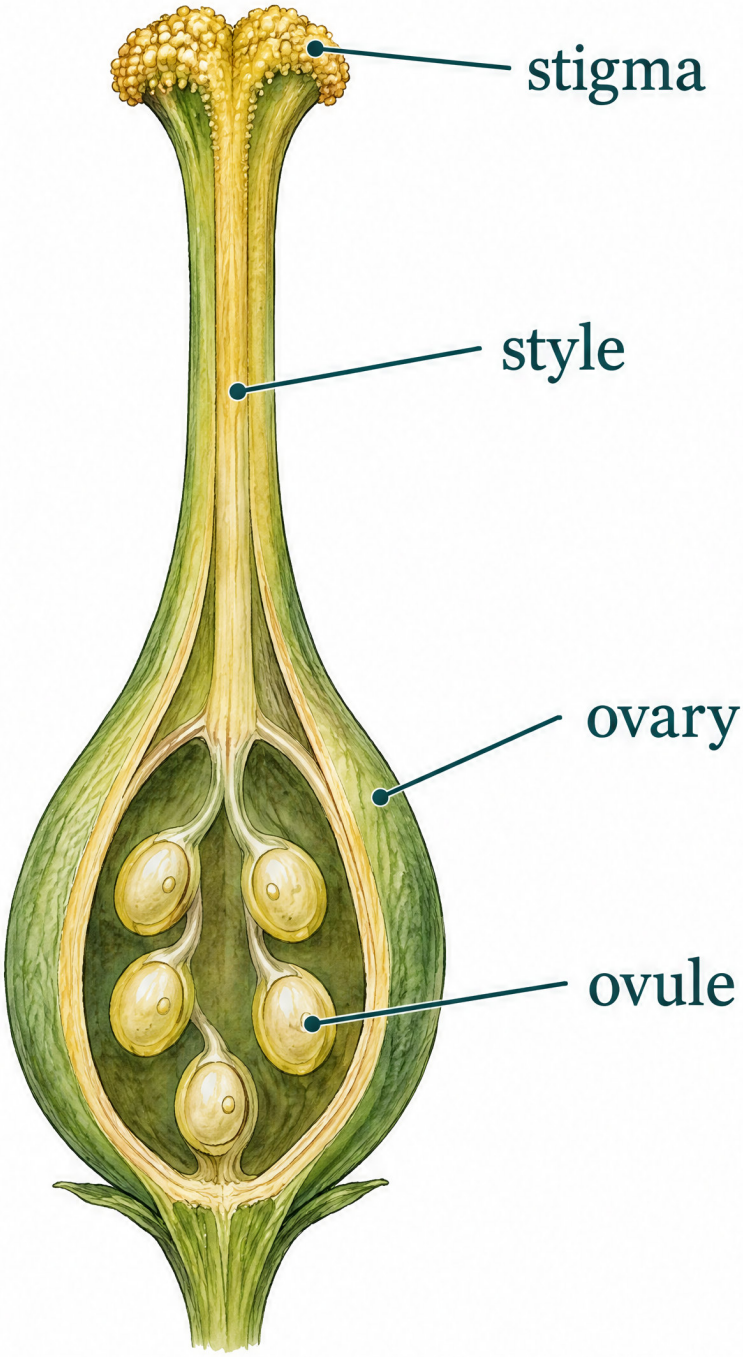
Why does the filament need to be tall?

_____

_____

Inside a Pistil

The pistil is the part that makes seeds. It has three pieces. The stigma at the top is sticky, so pollen sticks to it. The style is the neck underneath. The ovary is the fat part at the bottom, and inside it are tiny ovules waiting to become seeds.



Every ovule that gets pollinated becomes one seed.

Sticky on Purpose

The very top of the pistil is called the stigma, and it is sticky on purpose. When a bee brushes past, loose grains of pollen catch on it and stay put. A smooth stigma would let the pollen slide straight off, and no seeds would ever be made.





Sticky: the pollen stays



Smooth: the pollen falls

What else can you think of that works because it is sticky?

_____

_____

Complete or Incomplete?

A complete flower has ALL FOUR kinds of part: sepals, petals, stamens and a pistil.

If even one of the four is missing, the flower is called incomplete. Grass flowers are incomplete — most grasses have no sepals and no petals at all.



Buttercup

☐ complete

☐ incomplete



Meadow grass

☐ complete

☐ incomplete



Willow catkin

☐ complete

☐ incomplete

Perfect or Imperfect?

This is a DIFFERENT question from the last page.

Last page we asked: does it have all four kinds of part? This page asks something else entirely: does it have BOTH the male parts and the female parts? A flower with both is called perfect. A flower with only one or the other is imperfect.



Buttercup

- ☐ perfect
- ☐ imperfect



Squash

- ☐ perfect
- ☐ imperfect



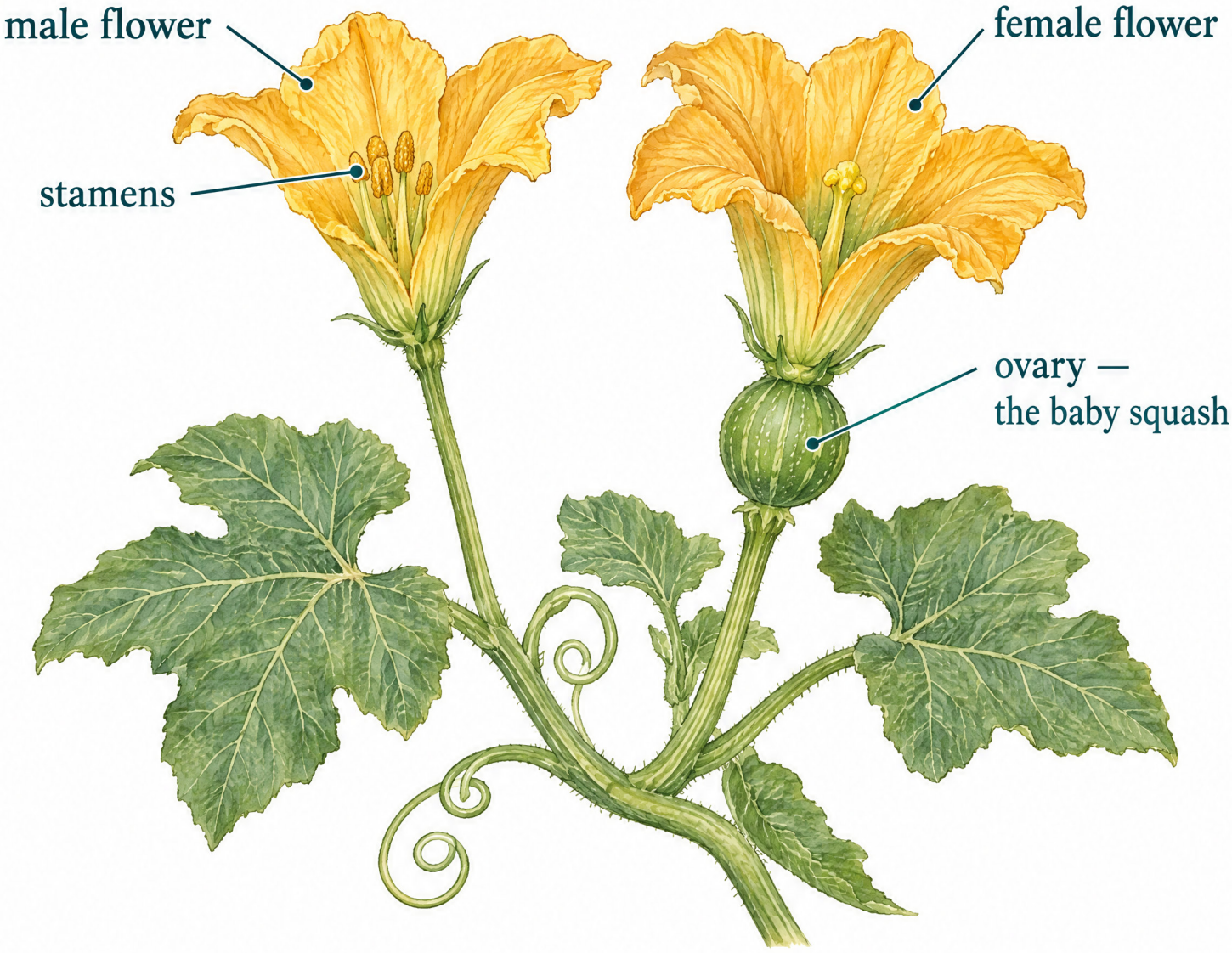
Meadow grass

- ☐ perfect
- ☐ imperfect

Careful — a grass flower is incomplete AND perfect at the same time.

Two Kinds of Flower on One Plant

Some plants grow two different flowers. A squash vine has male flowers on plain thin stems, and female flowers with a tiny baby squash already swelling underneath. That little swelling is the ovary. If a bee visits, it grows into the squash you eat. If no bee comes, it shrivels and drops off.



Which flower will turn into a squash? How can you tell?

_____

_____

How Pollination Works

Number the pictures 1 to 4 to put the story in order.









Pollination is the delivery. What happens afterwards, deep inside, is called fertilization. They are two different things.

The Pollen Tube

Here is the part almost everybody gets wrong. The grain of pollen does not travel down inside the flower. It stays exactly where it landed, on the sticky stigma — and it grows a long thin tube downwards instead, all the way to an ovule waiting in the ovary.

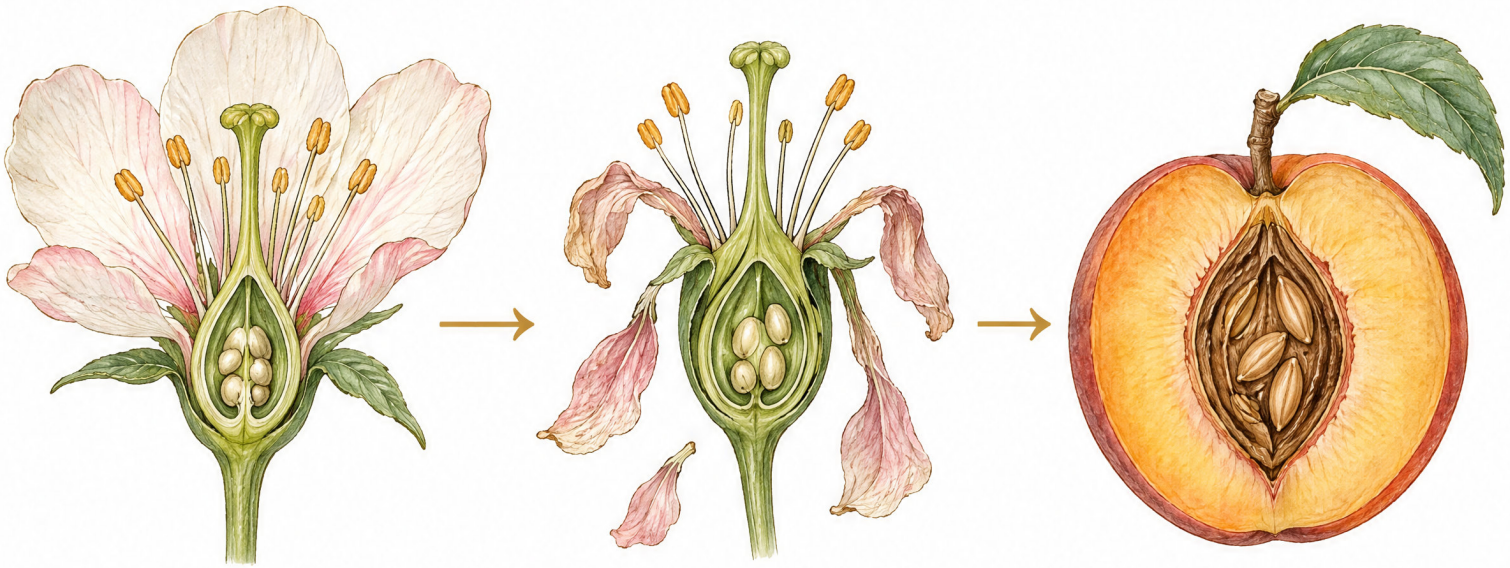


1 2 3 4

The pollen stays put. Only the tube travels.

From Ovule to Seed

Once an ovule has been fertilized, two things change at once. The tiny ovule becomes a seed. And the ovary all around it swells up and becomes the fruit. Every fruit you have ever eaten was once the ovary of a flower.



Flower → Petals fall → Fruit with seeds

ovule → seed

ovary → fruit

Name a fruit you have eaten. Where were its seeds?

_____

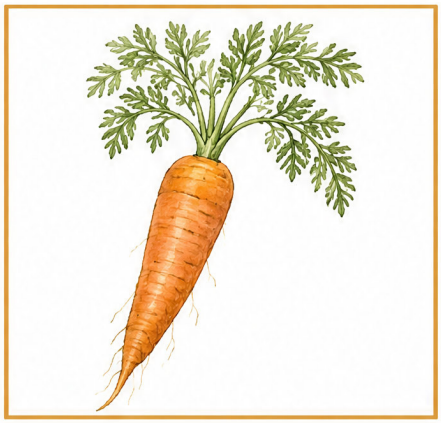
_____

Surprise — That's a Fruit!

A fruit is a grown-up ovary with seeds inside. Check the ones that are really fruits.



tomato ☐



carrot ☐



zucchini ☐



lettuce ☐



pumpkin ☐



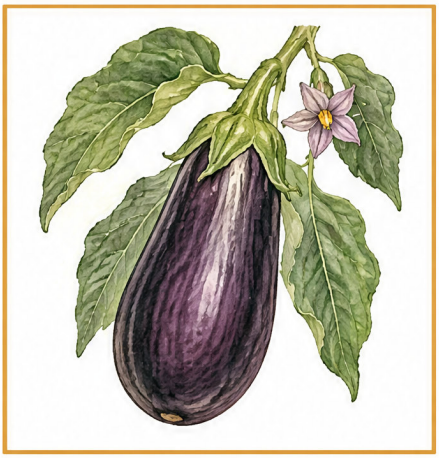
green beans ☐



potato ☐



pepper ☐



eggplant ☐

Meet the Poppy



A poppy makes NO nectar at all.
Bees visit it anyway — they come for the pollen instead.

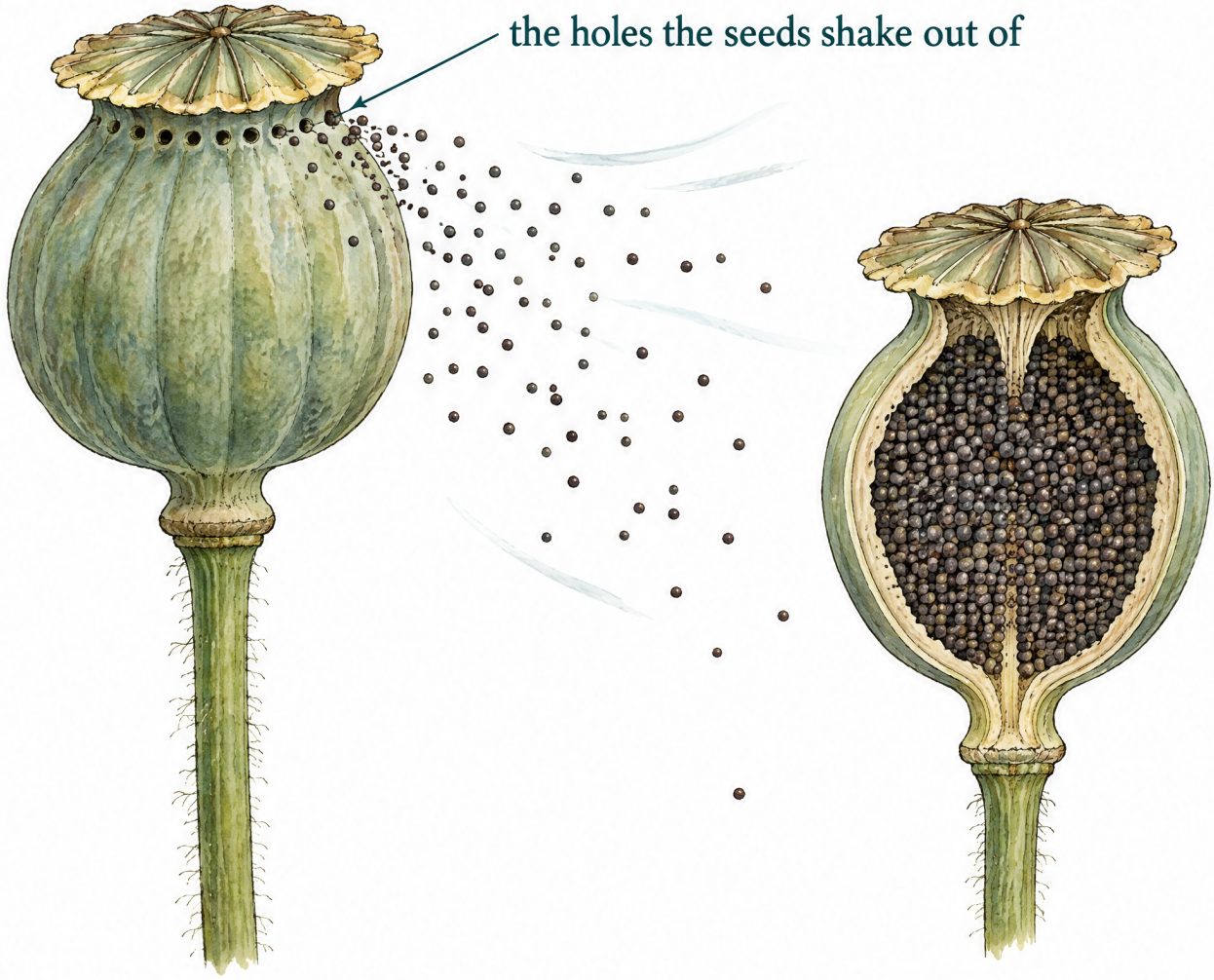
Why might a bee still visit a flower with no nectar?

_____

_____

The Pepper-Pot Pod

When a poppy has finished flowering, it leaves behind a hard green capsule with a little lid on top. Just under the rim is a ring of small holes. When the wind rocks the stem, the seeds sprinkle out of the holes — exactly like salt from a pepper pot.



Draw your own poppy pod. How many holes will you give it?

Count the Flower Parts

Count the petals on each flower, then write the number.

Flowers often count in threes, or in fours and fives. Lilies, tulips and irises count in threes. Buttercups and wild geraniums count in fives. It is not a rule, but it is a very good clue.



Lily ☐



Tulip ☐



Buttercup ☐



Wild geranium ☐

Which two count in threes? Which two count in fives?

The Sunflower Surprise

How many flowers can you see in this picture?



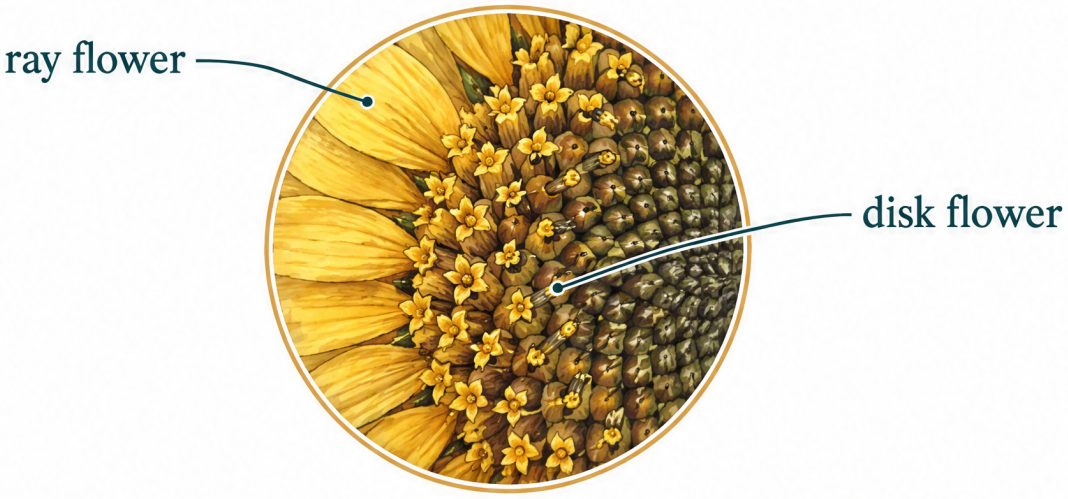
Buttercup



Sunflower

One, and hundreds.

A sunflower is not one flower. It is hundreds of tiny flowers packed onto one plate. Even the big yellow petals around the edge are not petals — each one is a whole little flower of its own. And every tiny flower in the dark middle grows into one sunflower seed.



Secret Stripes

A bee cannot see the color red at all. But it can see a color we cannot: ultraviolet. Many flowers have secret stripes painted in ultraviolet, pointing straight to the middle where the nectar is. They are landing lights, and we have never been able to see them.



What you see



What a bee sees

These stripes are called nectar guides.

A Flower for Every Visitor

Draw a line from each visitor to the flower built for it.



Hummingbird



Blue and yellow, with a landing pad



Moth



Smells of rotten meat



Fly



Red trumpet, no smell at all



Bee



Pale, opens at night, sweet scent

Flowers That Open at Night

Not every flower opens in the morning. Some wait for the dark. Night flowers are pale or white so they show up in moonlight, and they give off a strong sweet scent that travels a long way. Their visitors are moths and bats. Some moths have a tongue longer than their whole body.



Why would a night flower be white instead of red?

_____

_____

_____

No Petals at All

Some flowers do not bother with petals, or scent, or nectar. They are not trying to attract anybody. These flowers let the wind carry their pollen instead, so there is nobody to impress. About one flowering plant in five works this way. A single corn plant can release millions of grains of pollen into the air.



Meadow grass



Hazel catkin



Corn tassel

No color. No scent. No nectar. Nobody is coming to look.

Why would a plant give up having petals?

Seeds on the Move

A seed has to get away from its parent, or there will be no room to grow.



Dandelion



Maple



Coconut



Burdock



Berry

A dandelion seed can travel up to 500 miles.

A maple key can spin more than 100 yards — the length *of* a football field.

Flower Vocabulary

Draw a line from each word to what it means. Then trace the word.

sepal

sepal

the sticky landing pad on top

petal

petal

the part that makes pollen

stamen

stamen

the green part that protected the bud

pistil

pistil

where the seeds are made

stigma

stigma

the bright part that pollinators see

ovary

ovary

the female part in the middle

Draw and Label Your Own Flower

Invent a flower. Give it sepals, petals, stamens and a pistil. Then decide who visits it — and make sure the shape and color suit your visitor.

My flower is called _____

It is this color because _____

Its visitor is _____

It smells like _____

What I Learned

1. What is the sticky part at the top of the pistil called?

   _____

2. Which part of the flower makes pollen?

   _____

3. What does an ovule turn into?

   _____

4. What does an ovary turn into?

   _____

5. Name one flower that makes no nectar at all.

   _____

6. How many flowers are in one sunflower head?

   _____

The most surprising thing I learned:

_____

_____

_____

Answer Key

Parts of a Flower — every answer checked against a published source

P6–7 Parts of a Flower

petal · sepal · stamen · pistil · ovary · stem

P8 The Four Rings

From the outside in: sepals, petals, stamens, pistil.

P9 Inside a Stamen

So that the pollen is held up high, where wind or a visiting insect can carry it away.

P10 Inside a Pistil

stigma (sticky top) · style (the neck) · ovary (the fat base) · ovule (inside the ovary).

P11 Sticky on Purpose

Answers vary — tape, burrs, a gecko's foot, honey. The point is that sticky holds the pollen where a smooth surface would let it slide off.

P12 Complete or Incomplete?

Buttercup: complete. Meadow grass: incomplete (no sepals, no petals). Willow catkin: incomplete (no petals).

P13 Perfect or Imperfect?

Buttercup: perfect. Squash: imperfect — male and female parts are in separate flowers. Meadow grass: perfect.

P14 Two Kinds of Flower

The female flower, because it already has a tiny swollen ovary — the baby squash — underneath it.

P15 How Pollination Works

1. The bee gets dusted with pollen at the anthers. 2. It flies to another flower and touches the pistil. 3. A pollen grain lands on the sticky stigma. 4. A seed forms inside the swelling fruit.

P16 The Pollen Tube

The pollen grain stays on the stigma. Only the tube grows down through the style to the ovule.

P17 From Ovule to Seed

The ovule becomes the seed. The ovary becomes the fruit. Answers about fruits will vary.

P18 That's a Fruit!

Fruits: tomato, zucchini, pumpkin, green beans, pepper, eggplant. Not fruits: carrot (root), lettuce (leaves), potato (tuber).

P19 Meet the Poppy

For the pollen. A poppy makes no nectar at all, and bees collect pollen as food too.

P20 The Pepper-Pot Pod

Answers vary. The real pod has a ring of small holes under the lid, and the wind shakes the seeds out.

P21 Count the Flower Parts

Lily 6 · tulip 6 · buttercup 5 · wild geranium 5. Lily and tulip count in threes; buttercup and wild geranium count in fives.

P22 The Sunflower Surprise

One, and hundreds. The buttercup is one flower; the sunflower is a head of hundreds of tiny flowers, and even the outer yellow "petals" are whole flowers.

P23 Secret Stripes

Nectar guides — stripes painted in ultraviolet, which bees can see and we cannot.

P24 A Flower for Every Visitor

Hummingbird to red trumpet, no smell. Moth to pale, opens at night, sweet scent. Fly to smells of rotten meat. Bee to blue and yellow, with a landing pad.

P25 Flowers That Open at Night

Because white shows up in moonlight and red does not. Color is no use in the dark, so night flowers use pale petals and strong scent instead.

P26 No Petals at All

Because nobody is coming to look. Wind-pollinated flowers spend nothing on color, scent or nectar.

P27 Seeds on the Move

Dandelion: wind. Maple: wind (spinning). Coconut: water. Burdock: hitching a ride on fur. Berry: eaten by a bird.

P28 Flower Vocabulary

sepal = the green part that protected the bud · petal = the bright part that pollinators see · stamen = the part that makes pollen · pistil = the female part in the middle · stigma = the sticky landing pad on top · ovary = where the seeds are made

P30 What I Learned

1. The stigma. 2. The stamen (the anther). 3. A seed. 4. The fruit. 5. The poppy. 6. Hundreds.

Worth knowing for page 13: every imperfect flower is also incomplete, but an incomplete flower is not always imperfect. A grass flower has no petals and no sepals, yet it has both male and female parts — so it is incomplete AND perfect at once.

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