

College Guild
PO Box 6448 Brunswick, Maine 04011

Gardening

Unit 3 of 7

*"What a desolate place would be a world without a flower!
 It would be a face without a smile, a feast without a welcome
 And are not flowers the stars of the earth,
 And are not our stars the flowers of the heaven"*

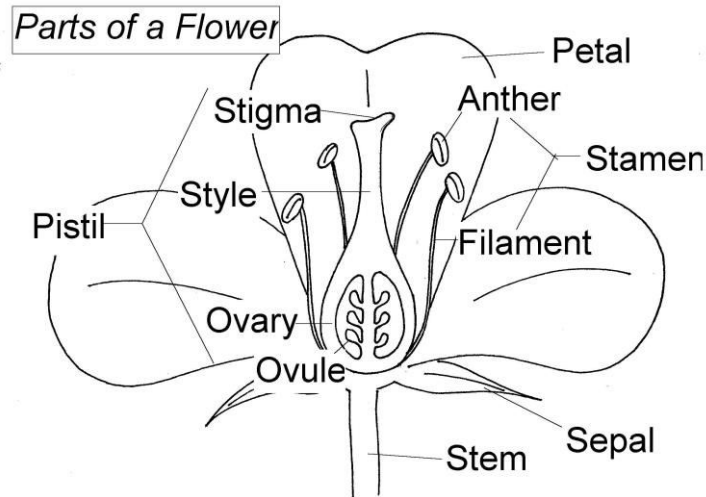
Quotation by A. J. Balfour (1848 - 1930); Prime Minister of Great Britain from 1902 - 1905.

1. Do you agree with the last two lines of the poem? Why or why not?
2. How would you interpret their meaning?



In this Unit we are going to take a closer look at flowers and try and understand why they are so important to us and why they make us feel so many different emotions.

3. Name four different occasions when you might send flowers to someone.
4. What sort of flowers would you send?
5. What are your favorite flowers? And why?
6. Why do you believe it's as popular as it is to send flowers to people for special occasions?



The flower, or bloom of a plant, contains the plant's reproductive system. The color of the petals and the flower's fragrance attracts insects that fly inside the flower to collect nectar. While in the flower, they transfer pollen from the "stamens" (male part) to the "pistils" (female part).

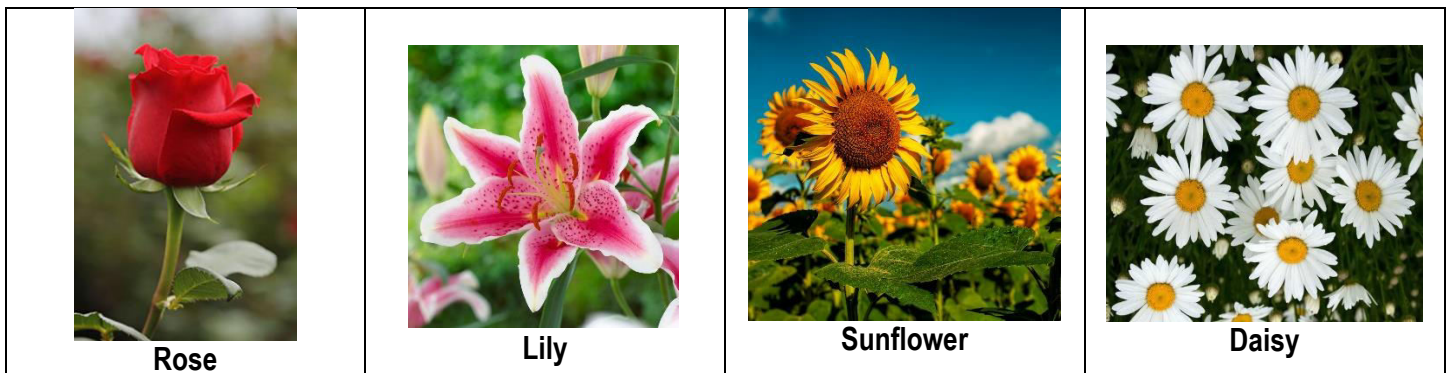
Once the pollen has been transferred, the flower can then produce fruits or seed heads containing the seeds.

7. Describe three ways that the seeds can be distributed to other areas where they will grow as new plants.

8. If you could be a flower, what kind would you want to be and why?

Many flowers have symbolic meanings. For example, with roses, each color offers distinctly different symbolic meanings. Red roses signify enduring passion; white roses signify humility and innocence; yellow roses express friendship and joy; pink signifies gratitude and admiration; orange signifies enthusiasm. Most florists are aware of these designations and help customers who may not be aware of these symbolic meanings to inadvertently send the wrong colors. An example would be sending red roses for a funeral.

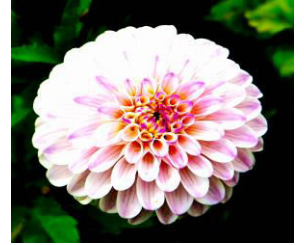
9. What emotions or feelings do you experience when you see these flowers? Do you believe your feelings are typical of how most people would perceive them? Why or why not?



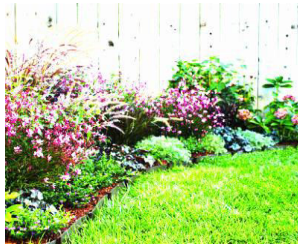
Now it's brainteaser time!

10. How many words can you make from the word *flowers*? Hint -- there are at least eight.

Most flowering plants can be divided into two types -- *annuals* and *perennials*. Annuals grow from seed and they flower and die in a single season. Most annuals are bedding plants, sold ready to plant and to help fill out the garden beds with masses of color. They are usually planted sometime in May and will generally bloom until September. They are also commonly used in container gardening. Examples of annuals are the petunia, pansy, and dahlia.



11. What would be the disadvantages of a garden with just annuals in it?



A *perennial* is a plant that does not die after one season's growth. Usually the upper part of the plant and the flowers do die off, but the roots remain alive, and in the spring new growth appears again. The following year the plant is often much bigger than it was the previous year. Most perennials bloom at certain times only, unlike annuals that bloom all summer, so in order to have a garden that is consistently in bloom you need a selection of perennials that bloom at different times.

There's a common phrase that many gardeners are aware of when they plant perennials: "*The first year they sleep; the second year they creep and the third year they leap*".

12. What do you think this phrase means? How could a gardener use this phrase to her or his advantage?

Examples of perennials are the coneflower, peony, and Goat's Beard.



Coneflower



Peony

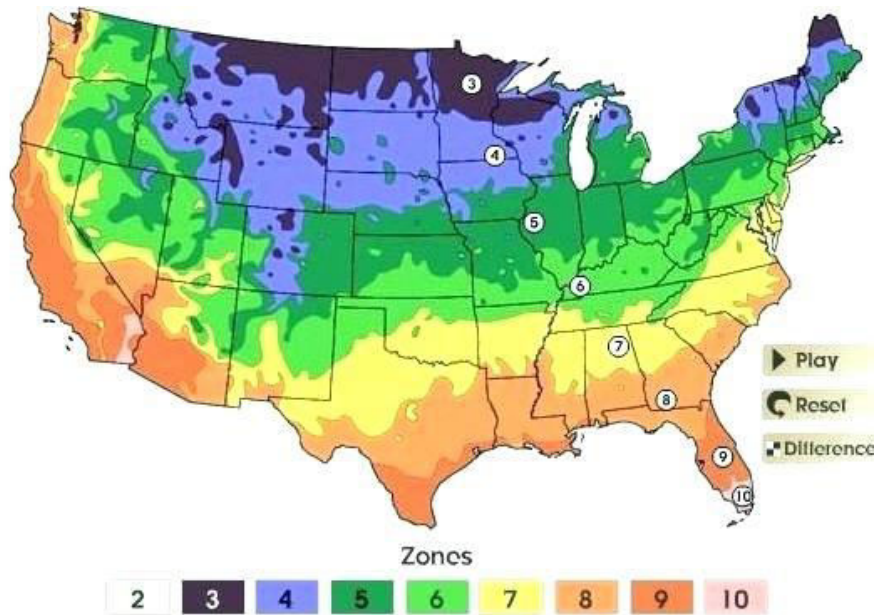


Goat's Beard

13. What would be some disadvantages of a garden with just perennials in it?

14. Would you prefer to garden primarily with annuals or perennials? Why?

When planting perennials, it's imperative that gardeners understand the climate of the area in which they live. These climactic differences are designated as "zones".



As you can see on the map above, each zone is designated with a different shade. Gardeners in zones 3-6 need to be much more careful about what they plant since the winters are harsher and colder, and plants that are suitable for zones 7-10 will typically die in the winters of those zones. Conversely, plants that do exceedingly well in zones 3-6 may wilt and die in the hotter temperatures of zones 7-10. Companies that breed plants for sale label their plants by zone, which is very helpful.

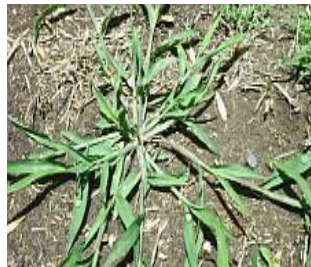
15. Would you expect plants that grow well in zone 10 to also grow well in the jungles of Central America? Why or why not?

Weeds

A few examples of weeds are *dandelions*, *crabgrass*, and *goldenrod*.



Dandelion



Crabgrass



Goldenrod

Some people say "a weed is just the right plant in the wrong place" or that "a flower is just an educated weed."

16. Which of these statements above would you agree with more? Why?

Most weeds left uncontrolled will take over the garden. They will compete for everything that they need to survive -- water, light, air, nutrients, and space above and below ground. They need to be pulled or dug out of the ground, making sure the entire plant is removed. However, there are times when weeds are actually planted on purpose, such as to prevent erosion on a hillside.

An old Spanish proverb states: "More grows in the garden than the gardener sows."

The defining characteristic of most weeds is that they grow where they are likely not wanted. Most weeds are taller, rangier and seem to grow faster than more pleasing plants. Weeds make the whole garden less attractive and appear untended. Many weeds, like crabgrass and dandelions, are prolific seed producers. Their seeds can remain dormant in the soil for years and germinate under favorable conditions. They want to move in and take over more space.

Another reason to hate weeds is that they steal water and nutrients from the plants you deliberately cultivate in the garden. While the weeds seem vigorous and healthy, the other plants appear puny and starved for water and fertilizer. It is curious that during this time of water restrictions, weeds appear to flourish without irrigation.

17. Write a short story about living in a garden from a weed's point of view.

When a gardener wants to eliminate weeds from the garden all year long, she or he needs to start early and stay diligent. Remember that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. In other words, it's wise to stop weeds before they get a true hold on a garden.

"The Garden State"

A politician from Camden, New Jersey is credited with giving the state the nickname "the Garden State" while speaking at the Philadelphia Centennial exhibition on New Jersey Day, August 24th 1876. He said that "our Garden State is an immense barrel, filled with good things to eat and open at both ends, with Pennsylvanians grabbing from one end and New Yorkers from the other."

18. What do you think he was referring to when he said, "good things to eat"?

In 1954, the state Legislature passed a bill to have "The Garden State" added to car license plates. The Governor at the time vetoed the bill and would not allow it. However, he was overruled by the Legislature, and to this day New Jersey license plates say "The Garden State".

19. Why do you think the Governor tried to veto the bill?

20. Why do you think the Legislature over-rode the Governor's veto? What is the advantage of using this logo or name for a state?



Common Meadow Violet



Red Oak



Eastern Goldfinch



Blueberry

In New Jersey the state flower is the Common Meadow Violet; the state tree is the Red Oak; the state bird is the Eastern Goldfinch; and the state fruit is the blueberry.

21. What do you think is the purpose of states having "state" flowers, trees, birds, and fruit?

22. What would you choose as the state flower, tree, bird, and fruit from your state. And why?



Remember: First names only & please let us know if your address changes