

POLLINATION

Flowering plants reproduce sexually through a process called pollination. Insects and other pollinators are attracted by the flower's colourful petals and nectar and land on the flower. While they are there, pollen grains on the anthers stick to the insects' bodies and they fly off covered in pollen. When they land on the next flower, the pollen they are carrying sticks to the stigma and grows down into the style in a pollen tube. When the pollen grain reaches the ovary, it combines with an egg or ovule in the ovary and starts to form a new seed. Eventually this seed will disperse and a new flowering plant will grow.

South London
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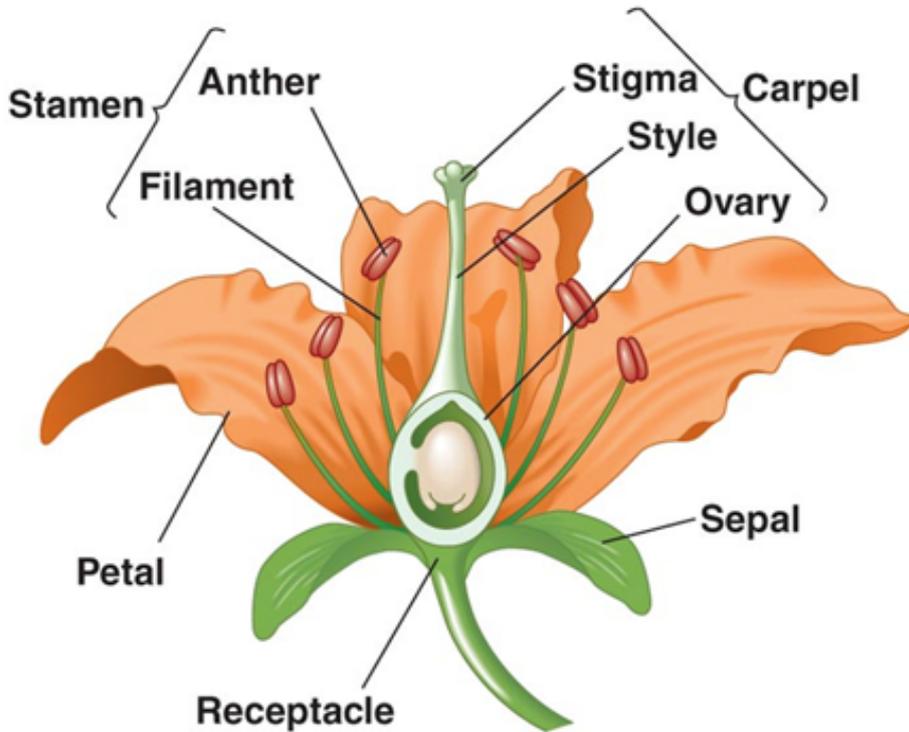


Can you remember the names of the flower parts?

The male part of the flower (the anther and the filament) is called the **STAMEN**.

The female part of the flower (the stigma, style and ovary) is called the **CARPEL** or **PISTEL**.

The **SEPALS** protect the flower when it is first forming.



The **PETALS** are colourful and hold nectar to attract insects and other pollinators to the flower.

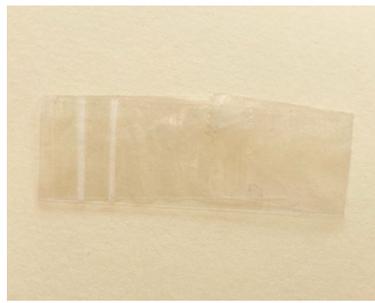
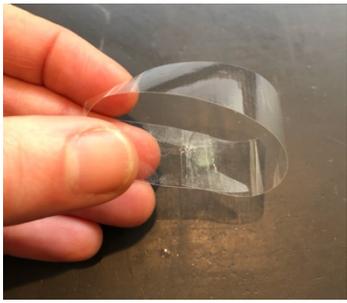
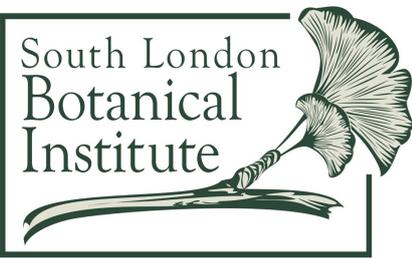


Pollinators can be bees, flies, butterflies, spiders, birds or bats!



Dissecting a flower

You will need: some carefully collected flowers, tweezers, sticky tape, and paper or card.

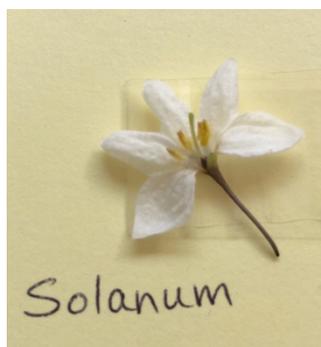


Preparing your card:

Cut a piece of sticky tape about 25cm in length.

With the sticky side on the outside, make it into a circle by sticking the two ends together.

Stick your circle of tape onto a piece of card or paper and press it down flat so that you have one sticky side up to stick your flower onto.



Dissecting your flower:

Before you stick your flower onto the sticky tape, have a good look inside and outside of the flower to see the arrangement of the sepals, petals, stigma and stamens.

Carefully open up the flower by pulling apart two of the petals to see inside and stick your flower flat onto the sticky tape. Some flowers you can stick directly flat onto the sticky tape without opening it up.

Can you count how many sepals, petals, stigmas and stamens your flower has?

Flowers from different plants will all look different.

If your flower has a large ovary, ask an adult to help you cut it in half - can you see any ovules/eggs inside?

You can also take a photo of the inside of a flower with a mobile phone and then zoom into the photograph. I have done this here with a bluebell, a yellow Welsh Poppy and a white Choisya flower.



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Good flowers to use which clearly show flower parts:

*Make sure you have permission to collect the flowers and only take what you need, damaging the plant as little as possible. Leave plenty for others to enjoy.

Spring: blossom, tulips, primroses, Choisya

Summer: bindweed, foxgloves, lilies, fuchsia, geraniums, nasturtiums, alstroemeria, solanum

Autumn: nerines, some summer plants will last into the autumn

Winter: snowdrops

*Always wash your hands after handling plant material!