Scavenger Hunt in the Plant Kingdom

The plant kingdom is all around us, from the smallest weeds to the tallest trees. If you explore the plant kingdom with the help of your pocket microscope, you may see hidden wonders you haven't noticed before!

What You Need: Pocket microscope. You should also provide a bag for collecting small plant parts.

Rules of the Scavenger Hunt

Go outside and see how many of these items you can collect in your bag. You may want to work with or compete against a friend. You have 25 minutes (or however much time your parents tell you). When you are done, bring your collection inside for examination under the microscope. Check the box for each item you examine.

Before you go, find out from your parents if there are any stinging or poisonous plants to be avoided in your neighborhood, or any valuable plants that you shouldn't disturb.

Leaves

Leaf with Netted Veins



Most trees, fruits & vegetables. Maple is a good example. The veins in a leaf carry water and nutrients to the cells of the leaf, all the way up from the roots!

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Leaf with Parallel Veins



Grasses and grains have parallel veins. See for yourself!

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Hairy or Fuzzy Leaf

You can tell by touch!

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Leaf Miner



Some insects spend their entire early life tunneling through a single leaf.

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Seeds & Spores

Fruit Dots on a Fern Frond

Brown or gray dots on the underside of the frond release spores to make new ferns.

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Burs



This is an interesting way for seeds to travel. Look closely with the microscope to discover why they stick to your clothes.

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Windborne Seeds





Such as maple "helicopters" or dandelion "parachutes"

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Seeds in Fruit



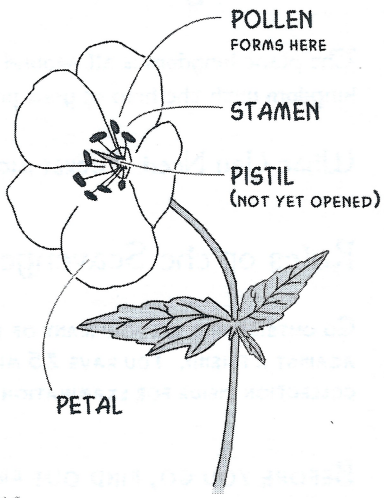


You may have to moosh the fruit to get the seeds out. Don't eat strange berries; some are poisonous.

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A Flower is a Seed Maker

It works something like this:



☐ **Petal**

Flower petals may turn bright colors and produce nectar to attract insects.

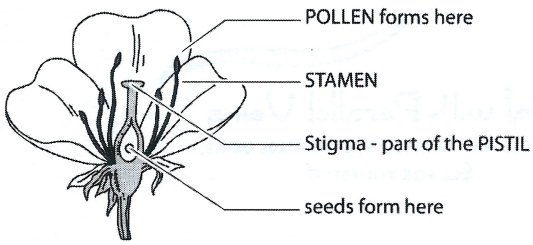
☐ **Pollen**

Looks like dust on the stamen. If pollen from one flower reaches the pistil of another flower, seeds will form.

☐ **Stamen**

Standing tall inside the bowl of the petals are the stamens. Stamens produce pollen. Bees that come for the nectar get this pollen on their bodies and carry it to other flowers.

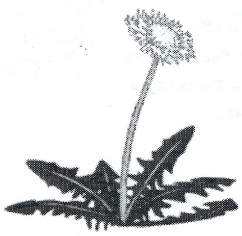
CUTAWAY VIEW
OF A FLOWER



☐ **Pistil**

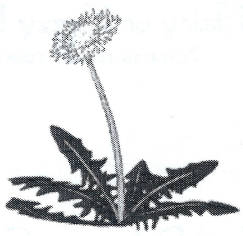
Look for it in the very center of the flower. The pistil may not open until the stamens have withered. This way the flower will not pollinate itself.

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Flower Cluster

Such as dandelions and clover. Each "flower" is actually made up of many small flowers. Tear one apart and see for yourself.



How many of these 13 items did you find?_____

(7 is good, and 10 is excellent!)

What was the most interesting under the microscope? _____

Why? _____

_____