

Flowering Annuals Activity



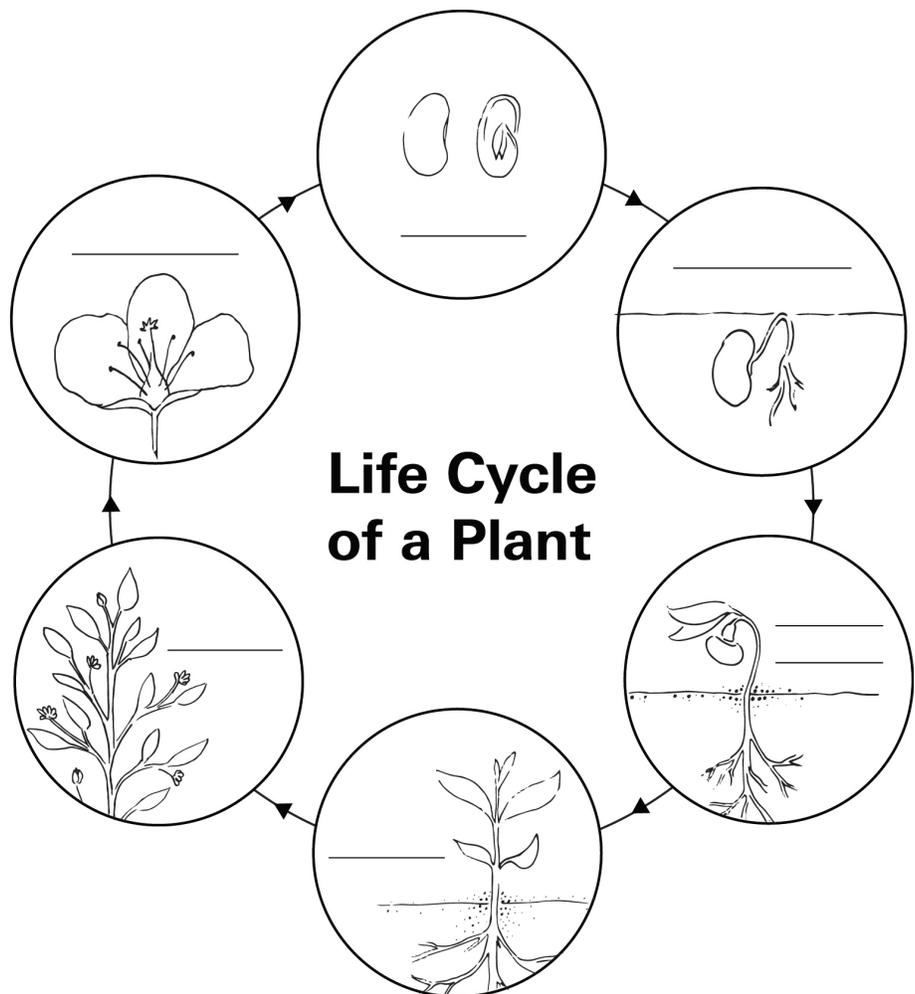
At a Glance

Discover how to recognize some common annuals and learn about the life cycle of flowering plants. Create an experiment with bean seeds to grow your own plant.

Did You Know?

All living things have basic needs. Plants need light, water, air, and nutrients to grow. Flowering plants have a life cycle that begins and ends with a seed. The seed germinates and forms roots and a stem. This sprout grows into a seedling, which is a young plant with leaves. The plant must grow into a mature adult plant before it can produce a flower. Once the flower blooms it can be pollinated and seeds can form. Once seeds form, the plant's life cycle can start all over again.

Below you will find a picture of the life cycle of a plant. Can you fill in the words to complete the diagram?



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Annuals

Some flowering plants are called annuals. Annuals live for only one growing season. This means the plant germinates, flowers, and produces seed in one growing season. All parts of the plant die at the end of the season. New plants will emerge from the seeds during the next season.

Flower Hunt

Below you will find six common annuals found in USDA Zone 7, which includes Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, Pa. USDA Plant Hardiness Zones are the standard by which gardeners and growers determine which plants are most likely to thrive in a location. The map is based on the average annual minimum winter temperature.

Explore outside and see if you can find these annuals growing in your yard or local park. Check off the ones you find.

Next time you go to your local garden center, see if you can find these six annuals and impress someone by knowing their names!



Petunia



Impatiens



Zinnia



Sunflower



Geranium



Snap Dragon

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Materials:

- 1 dried bean (lima or pinto bean)
- Beanie Baby Observation Sheet
- Clear snack size storage bag
- Cotton ball
- Scotch tape
- Water

Grow Your Own Beanie Baby

Did you know that many of the fruits and vegetables you eat are annuals? A bean plant is just one example. In this experiment you'll get to watch the life cycle of the bean seed and discover the baby plant waiting inside to grow!

Directions:

1. Wet a cotton ball in water. Make sure to squeeze out the excess water.
2. Place the cotton ball in a clear snack size storage bag.
3. Place dried bean on top of the cotton ball and close the bag.
4. Tape the sealed bag to a sunny window.
5. Record your hypothesis and daily observations on the Beanie Baby Observation Sheet.
6. Once your bean grows its first leaf, your bean plant is ready to be removed from the bag and planted in some soil.
7. Challenge yourself to bring your plant through the entire life cycle. Can you get your bean plant to flower? Will you get to harvest beans this season from your plant?

Extension:

Create additional beanie babies to compare growing conditions:

- Place one beanie baby in a dark area and one beanie baby in a sunny window. Compare your results.
- Place one beanie baby on a wet cotton ball and one beanie baby on a dry cotton ball. Compare results.
- Place one beanie baby in cold refrigerator and one beanie baby in the sun. Compare results.

