



KIDS CONNECTION

Stately Sunflowers

Kansas designated the wild native sunflower as the official state flower and floral emblem in 1903. The sunflower is also featured on the Kansas quarter and state flag. Kansas is nicknamed "The Sunflower State."

Fun Facts!

Sunflowers are native to North America.

Native Americans used the seeds as a high-energy food source.

Spanish explorers carried sunflower seeds with them to Europe.

Russian agronomists created the first agricultural hybrids.

About 25 percent of all sunflower seeds produced are used in birdseed.



Sunflower Butter

Do you love peanut butter? Try Sunflower butter - it's amazing!



Field of Sunflowers

A beautiful place to take photos!



Whole Seeds

A yummy high protein snack!



Toxin Control

Sunflower roots remove toxins from soil. The process is called phytoremediation.

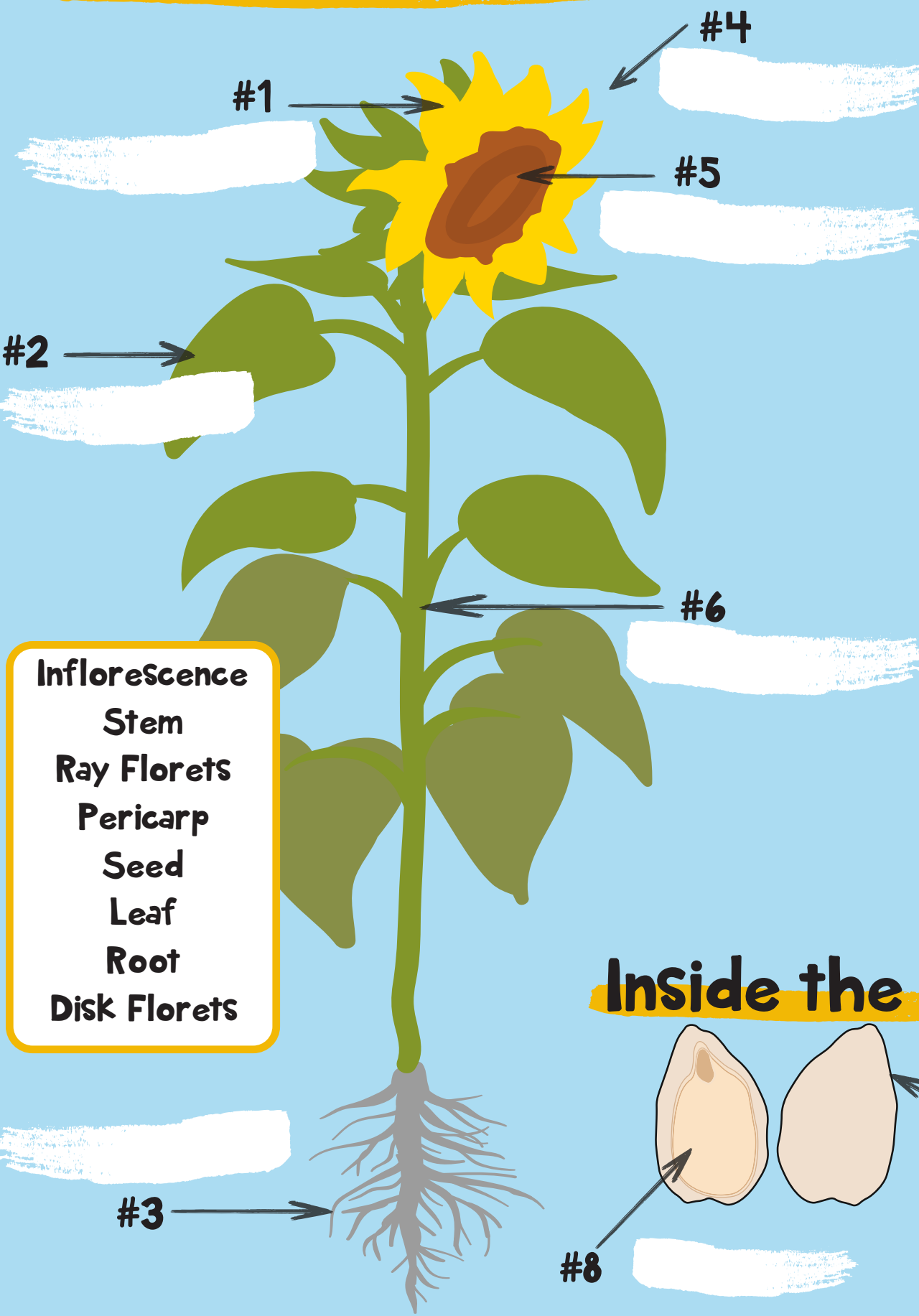


Sunflower Oil

Use sunflower oil for cooking and dressings.



Fill in the Blanks



- Inflorescence
- Stem
- Ray Florets
- Pericarp
- Seed
- Leaf
- Root
- Disk Florets

Florets are tiny flowers.

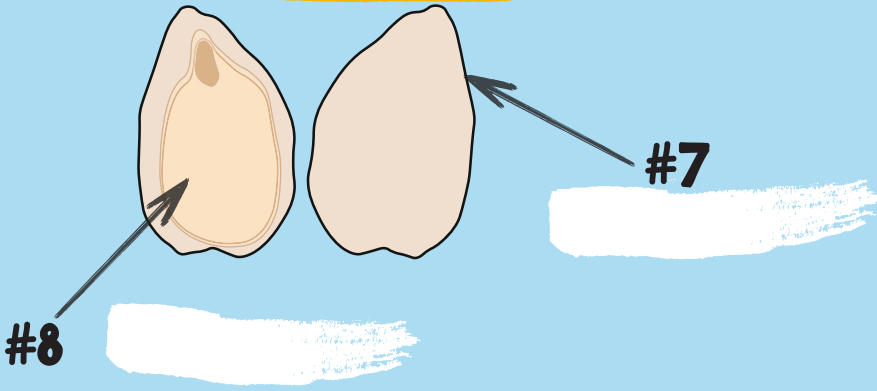
The head of a sunflower isn't a single flower, but many small **florets**. All together the florets that make up the sunflower are called an **inflorescence**.

The outer flowers on the sunflower are the **ray florets**.

In the center of the flower are the **disk florets** which make the delicious **seeds**.

Crack open the seed coat to get to the sunflower **seed**. The seed's outer layer is called a **pericarp**, or wall.

Inside the Shell



The Sunflower Life Cycle

#1 Seed

Inside the sunflower seed is a small embryo, or baby plant. The shell protect the baby plant until it is ready to grow.

#2

Germination or Sprout

Once planted in the soil, water, air, and sunlight help the seed sprout and begin to absorb nutrients through the roots and leaves. The plant's food-making process is called photosynthesis.

#5 Mature Sunflower

Maturity is reached when the seeds are dry and ready for harvest.

It takes
about 110 days or
about 3.5 months,
for sunflowers to
grow to maturity
in Kansas.

#3 Flower Bud

The budding flower, or terminal bud.

#4 Adult Sunflower

The bright yellow top not a flower, but a head. It is made up of many flowers tightly packed together. The inner flowers of the circular center are known as disc florets which mature into the sunflower seed.

Fun Fact!

There are more than 60 species of sunflowers.

The native sunflower grows up to 15 feet tall with flower heads 2 feet in diameter. The sunflower can produce over 1,000 seeds from one plant.

Grow your own Sunflower



Although sunflowers can be started indoors in pots, it is easiest to sow seeds directly into the soil after all danger of spring frost is past.

1. Choose a sunny spot.
2. Prepare the soil. Sunflowers are very hardy and grow in all 50 states, but their favorite soil is sandy.
3. Wait until late spring when there is no fear of frost.
4. Dig a hole two inches deep. Drop in one seed and cover it with loose dirt.
5. Water every other day - make sure that the soil stays damp.
6. In 7-10 days the seed will sprout.

Depending on the type of sunflower plant, the sunflower will mature and develop seeds in 80 to 120 days.



When Sunflowers are buds they turn to follow the sun all day. Mature flowers face a fixed easterly direction.

This behavior is called heliotropism.

Sunflowers come in lots of sizes and colors.

Mammoth

This giant sunflower grows 12-feet tall with huge 12-inch wide blooms..

Autumn Beauty

Bold 8-inch wide blooms in bright yellow, bronze and purple combinations.

Moulin Rouge

The dark red petals only have a slight hint of yellow at their base. Easy to grow, the small blooms are great for floral arrangements.

Teddy Bear

Fully double, fluffy flowers reaching up to 6 inches in diameter. Without the flat center, the bright deep yellow flowers look like large powder puffs. This dwarf sunflower is ideal for borders and containers.

Career Corner

Agronomist

an expert in the science of soil management and crop production.

Sales/Marketing

the person who helps get products to market

Farmer

the person who plants and harvests crops

Soil Scientist

the person who evaluates soils to understand how they contribute to agricultural production and environmental quality.



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