

Plant Name Explorers

How plants got their names.

Have you ever wondered why things have names? Names help us to talk about the world around us, and that includes plants. In this activity, we're going to take a journey through the world of plant names, where we'll discover how plants are named, what their names mean, and how people from different places use different names for the same plant.

We'll explore common names—such as Daisy or Dandelion—and scientific names, which act like universal codes that help scientists around the world identify specific plants with precision. We'll also explore how plant names can come from history, stories, or local traditions, and even get creative by inventing a plant of our very own!

Along the way, we'll be:

- Matching names and pictures
- Reading fun facts about how plants got their names
- Identifying plants by their names and clues
- Cutting, sticking, and sorting

Using our imagination to design a brand-new plant with its own name and story

Suitable for ages: 5-12

You will need: The activity sheets (words sheet with the words ready cut out, picture sheet and scientific names sheet, story sheet), scissors, glue, plain paper, colouring pencils.

IMPORTANT: When printing this resource print the picture sheet and scientific names sheet back to back (double-sided)



Plant Name Explorers

A Step-by-Step Guide for Teachers and Parents

Step 1: Welcome Explorers!

Let everyone know they're about to go on a name-hunting adventure into the wild world of plants. Go around the group and ask everyone to say their name. Got doubles? Ask how we can tell them apart—maybe by last name, a fun nickname, or even their favourite plant.

Step 2: Word Wonder Time

Spread out the cut-out words and challenge the group to see how many connections they can find.

Step 3: Wait... What Do You Call It?

Explain how people from different places—even just down the road—can have totally different names for the same thing, including plants. Confusing? Yes, it can be, but this is also really interesting. The names can be slightly different, or totally different.

Step 4: Secret Code of Science

Now reveal the secret: plants have *scientific names*. These special names come from Greek and Latin and help everyone speak the same plant language, no matter where in the world you are.

Step 6: Picture story match up

Hand out the picture sheet and story sheet. Many everyday names for plants are like mini-stories—based on how they look, smell, or what people believed about them. Can they match the story to the plant picture *and* its name? Work together or make it a team challenge.

Step 7: Cut, Sort & Stick

Time to get crafty! Cut out the plant pictures and the plant names. Stick the plant pictures as doors onto the right boxes of the story sheet, and stick the names under the right plants. Which door opens to which plant?

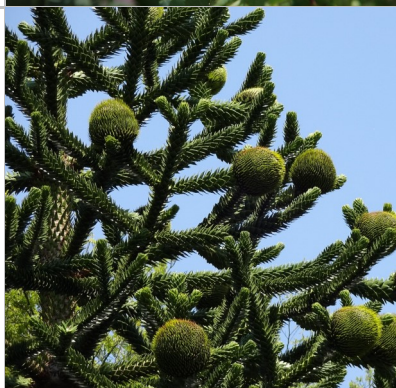
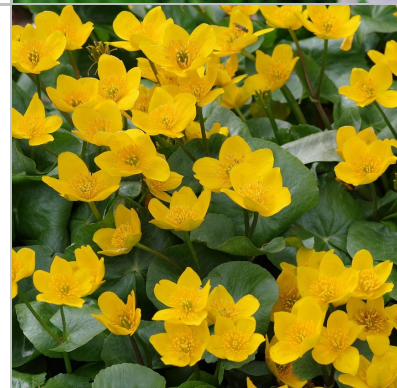
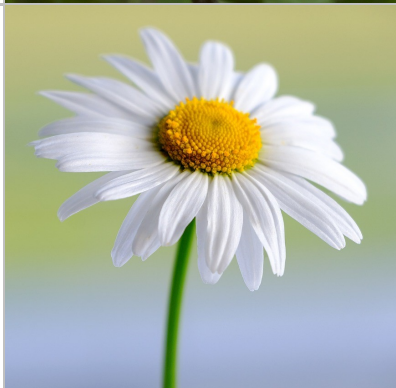
Step 8: Decode the Science [for the older adventurers]

Flip the plant picture sheet over and look at the scientific names and their interesting meanings.

Word sheet.

Cut each out.

Woodlouse	Roly-poly
Settee	Sofa
Trash	Rubbish
Wind flower	Wood anemone
Dressing gown	Robe
Sweets	Candy
Trunk	Boot



Dandelion

Sneezewort

Cuckoo flower

King cup

Dog rose

Daisy

Shepherds purse

Monkey puzzle tree

Wind flower

Scientific names sheet (Picture sheet reverse)

<p>Scientific name: <i>Cardamine pratensis</i> Greek-Kárdamon like the spice. <i>Pratensis</i> meaning 'of meadows'.</p>	Glue here	<p>Scientific name: <i>Achillea ptarmica</i> <i>Achillea</i> from the belief Achilles used these flowers to heal his soldiers wounds. <i>Ptarmica</i> from the Greek to cure a sneeze.</p>	Glue here	<p>Scientific name: <i>Taraxacum officinale</i> <i>Taraxacum</i> from the Arabic for a bitter herb. <i>Officinale</i> from 'official' when used in medicine/ pharmacology.</p>	Glue here
<p>Scientific name: <i>Caltha palustris</i> <i>Caltha</i> meaning cup or cup shaped in flowers. <i>Palustris</i> meaning 'of marshes'.</p>	Glue here	<p>Scientific name: <i>Rosa canina</i> <i>Rosa</i> meaning rose. <i>Canina</i> meaning 'of dogs'.</p>	Glue here	<p>Scientific name: <i>Bellis perennis</i> <i>Bellis</i> from the Latin <i>bella</i> meaning beautiful. <i>Perennis</i> meaning perennial.</p>	Glue here
<p>Scientific name: <i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i> <i>Capsella</i> from the Latin for 'box'. <i>Bursa</i> Latin for 'purse' <i>Pastoris</i> Latin for pastor 'Shepherd' .</p>	Glue here	<p>Scientific name: <i>Araucaria Araucana</i> <i>Araucaria</i> is the name given to this group of coniferous trees. <i>Araucana</i> named after the native people who used the seed.</p>	Glue here	<p>Scientific name: <i>Anemone nemorosa</i> <i>Anemone</i> from the Greek meaning 'daughter of the wind'. <i>Nemorosa</i> from the Latin <i>nemus</i> meaning 'forest'.</p>	Glue here

Wonderful World of Plant Names.

How plants got their names .

Stick plant here	The Victorians said that the stiff spiky leaves would puzzle a monkey trying to climb it.	Stick plant here	The Greeks believed this flower could cure a man bitten by a mad dog.	Stick plant here	It was thought that a powder made from this plant will clear a stuffy nose.
	Stick name here		Stick name here		Stick name here
Stick plant here	Pretty springtime flower, out when you can hear the cuckoo.	Stick plant here	Day's eye because it looks like a small sun that opens early in the morning and closes in the evening.	Stick plant here	Named after a button or cop such as kings once wore.
	Stick name here		Stick name here		Stick name here
Stick plant here	If the seedpods of this plant are picked when ripe, the seeds tumble out like coins from a purse.	Stick plant here	The Greeks said that these flowers wouldn't bloom unless the wind blew.	Stick plant here	The pointed leaves look like the teeth of a lion. The English name comes from the French Dent de lion, lion's-tooth.
	Stick name here		Stick name here		Stick name here