

MAKE RAINBOW FLOWERS ACTIVITY

TIME NEEDED

40 minutes plus observations over several days to see a result



Instructions:

1. Half fill the glass or vase with water.
2. Add one teaspoon of food colouring and make sure it is well mixed in with the water.
3. Help a Cub to use scissors to cut the stems of several (at least three) white carnations at a 45° angle. Be sure to use sharp scissors or a knife otherwise you could crush the stems, reducing their ability to absorb the water.
4. Place the carnations in the coloured water and watch what happens.
5. Optional: Take photos at regular intervals (every 12/24 hours) to record what happens

You will need

- A bunch of white carnations (at least three)
- A glass or vase
- Food colouring (red or blue are best)
- Water
- Sharp knife or scissors
- Adult helper
- Optional: Camera

How it works:

As a plant grows, water is sucked up the stem, in a similar way to drinking with a straw. This is called Capillary Action. Water is always being lost from the leaves and petals of a plant by a process of evaporation called Transpiration. As this water is replaced by the coloured water from the glass or vase, the food colouring stays behind, changing the colour of the petals and stem.

Safety

Knives and scissors can be dangerous. Sharp scissors will be the safer option.



EXTRA FUN

- Cut the stems of the carnations to different lengths to see if the petals change colour at different times.
- Try using different flowers. Does this make it easier or harder to see the changes?
- Try making the flowers change colours by placing them in one colour of water for a day then change to a different colour of water for the rest of the experiment.
- If you carefully cut the stem of the flowers into three or four strands, each strand can be placed in a different colour of water to make a rainbow effect in the flower head.

