**Flower Prints**

Hammering plants is full of surprises. You'll get beautiful results with very little effort and your students will be getting a valuable science lesson in the process. This in an activity that you and your students can do together to make some incredible artwork and, while you're hammering away, your students will be learning about the natural dyes and different parts of a plant. Each flower is unique in how it will look when it is imprinted onto paper or fabric. This is a great activity to do in the spring or summer when so many flowers are in bloom.

Materials:

* Clipboard or other smooth piece of wood
* Old newspapers
* Paper towels
* High quality white paper
* Flowers such as Bee Balm, Lobelia, Coreopsis, Pansies, Violas, Marigolds, Verbena, Phlox, Impatiens, Cosmos (Note: Stay away from white flowers or waxy flowers as well as flowers that are thick or too pulpy as they make for some not-so-pretty end results)
* Removable adhesive tape
* Hammer
* Iron

Procedures:

1. Set your board on a stack of newspapers and then place a paper towel over your board. It's a good idea to do this on a sturdy surface that can handle the force of some pounding, like a countertop or a stable desk or table.
2. Next, have the students place the white paper down on the paper towel and arrange whatever flowers they are using in a particular position. As they do this, you can discuss the different parts of a plant with them.
3. Help your students completely cover the flowers with tape. Then cover them with another paper towel.
4. Hold the hammer near the head and gently hammer the plant completely (this part should mostly be done by the grown-up, but if your students have good hand-eye coordination, you can let them give it a try). The pigment should bleed through showing you where you have hammered. Make sure you have hammered the flower entirely.
5. Once you and your students have hammered everything, leave the plant taped onto the paper. Turn the paper over and use a warm (not hot) iron to gently press the paper. The heat sets the pigment. Make sure your iron is warm but not hot because you don't want to scorch the paper.
6. Turn the paper over again and carefully peel off the tape and flower. If there is some plant material left on the paper, gently scrape it off with your finger.
7. If you want to hammer some flowers onto fabric instead of paper, follow Steps 1 through 3. Next, turn the fabric over so that you are hammering the back side of the fabric. When you have hammered everything, press the fabric with a hot iron for 20 seconds to set it.
8. Enjoy the beautiful work of art and display it with pride!

See if your students can guess what color their flowers will leave when it is hammered. Can they identify the pistol? The stamen? The pistol is the female receptacle of the flower that waits for the pollen so that pollination can occur. The stamen holds the pollen. Often flowers can have multiple stamens. If you like, you can bring out a book that has pictures of the different parts of a flower for you and your students to look through as you do this activity.

**Flower Prints Activity Worksheet:**

1. What color did your flower leave when it was hammered?

2. What is the pistol?

3. What is the stamen?

4. Do flowers have one or multiple stamens?

5. What is pollination?

6. Give an example of a pollinator.

7. What type of flower did you make a print out of?

8. Sketch the flower print in the space below and label the flower’s parts (petals, stem, stamen, pistol).