

Wild Native Sunflower

Make a sunflower necklace.

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Î recognize the sunflower as the state flower
- Ī utilize their fine motor skills through cutting and writing
- Đ write the word "Kansas"

MATERIALS FROM TRUNK

Graphics

- #11 - Wild Native Sunflower
- #12 - Sunflower Float

Worksheets

- #4 - Flower Petals
- #5 - Flower Centers

OTHER MATERIALS

- ' Items with sunflower images representing Kansas. See "Teacher Preparation."
- ' Yellow paper to run through the photocopy machine. One sheet per student.
- ' Brown construction paper.
- ' One piece of 24" yarn or string for each student.
- ' Scissors, paper punch, glue, and chalk.

TEACHER PREPARATION

- ' For an easier sunflower activity see the extended activity section of this lesson.
- ' Gather together items that use the sunflower to represent Kansas. Examples might include food with the "Made in Kansas" logo, state maps, brochures for tourist attractions, or the state flag.
- ' Photocopy worksheets #4 onto yellow paper, one copy per student. Copy worksheet #5, flower centers, onto brown paper. Two centers are needed per flower.
- ' Cut the yarn or string into 24" pieces, one per student.
- ' Write the word "Kansas" on a chalkboard or piece of paper where students can copy it if they need to.



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The wild native sunflower became the state flower in 1903. This made it the second symbol chosen to represent Kansas. Previous to the sunflower, only the state seal had this recognition.

The road to becoming the official state flower was not smooth. Less than twenty years after Kansas achieved statehood a newspaper editor from Atchison noted that the sunflower should be made the emblem of the state. This proposal did not gain formal approval. In 1895 the legislature named the sunflower a noxious weed and mandated that it be destroyed. This effort failed however, and in 1903 George Morehouse, state senator from Council Grove, drafted the legislation that named the common, or wild native, sunflower the official flower of Kansas.

Morehouse's support of the sunflower can be traced to a rodeo he attended in Colorado Springs in 1901. All the Kansans at the rodeo wore a sunflower as a badge of identification. Morehouse remembered that "It presented a pleasing scene, unique and attractive to every citizen of the Sunflower state. Our hearts swelled with pride and our thoughts and words fondly dwelt upon the resources, traditions and triumphs of the state we all love so well."

The bill naming the wild native sunflower as the state flower states that "This flower has to all Kansans a historic symbolism which speaks of frontier days, winding trails, pathless prairie and is full of the life and glory of the past, the pride of the present and richly emblematic of the majesty of the golden future, and is a flower which has given Kansas the world-wide name, 'The Sunflower State.'"

The sunflower has been part of Kansas for many years. For hundreds of years Indians living in the region of Kansas used seeds from the sunflower plant as a nutritious source of food. Prior to the opening of the Santa Fe trade, members of Stephen Long's expedition through Kansas in 1820 noted birds feeding on the seeds of a sunflower.

The variety of sunflower that became the official flower of Kansas is the common sunflower (*Helianthus*). This familiar yellow and orange flower blooms from July through September. It grows well in wide, open fields. This tall plant has dark green leaves. The sunflower is a composite flower, which means each sunflower is actually made up of many small flowers. Each petal is a separate flower. During the daylight, the blossoms face the sun. The common sunflower is one of many species of sunflowers, both wild and domestic, found in Kansas. Farmers raise special kinds of sunflowers for seeds and oil.

Sources:

Nottage, James H. and Floyd R. Thomas, Jr. "'There's No Place Like Home': Symbols and Images of Kansas." *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* (Autumn 1985): 138-61.



VOCABULARY

Badge	Something worn to show that a person belongs to a certain group or has received an honor. Examples include police badges or scouting group badges.
Symbol	Something that represents something else.

ACTIVITY

- 1) Show the class [graphic #11, the Common Sunflower](#), also known as the wild native sunflower. Tell them that this sunflower is a state symbol. It is the state flower of Kansas. Ask the class if they know what a symbol is.

® *Something that represents something else. Examples might include stop signs or traffic lights (red means stop and green means go) or placing a finger vertically across your mouth to indicate silence, quiet, or less noise.*

Explain to the class that the sunflower is one of the oldest symbols of Kansas. It is also one that people use most often. In fact Kansas is often called the "Sunflower State."

® *Sunflowers provided food for Native Americans that once lived on the land that is now called Kansas.*

® *Settlers moving to Kansas wrote about the sunflowers growing on the Plains.*

® *The sunflower grows throughout Kansas.*

Explain that so many people saw sunflowers and thought of Kansas when they saw them that we made it a symbol of Kansas. Show the class [graphic #12](#) and the sunflower objects you have found to share with them.

Talk to the class about how the sunflower became the state flower.

® *George Morehouse, a senator from Council Grove, had attended a rodeo in Colorado. At the rodeo everyone from Kansas wore a sunflower badge on his or her coat. Senator Morehouse saw this and immediately felt that the sunflower should be a symbol of Kansas.*

Have the class look once again at [graphic #11, Sunflower](#). Ask them what they think of when they see the flower. For example, is it a sunny cheerful flower or is it rather sad looking?

® *Bright yellow color, hardy plant that doesn't need to be carefully nurtured in a greenhouse.*

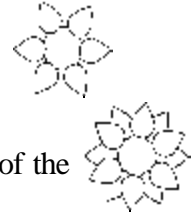
Ask the class if they think the sunflower was a good choice as the state flower of Kansas. Why?



- 2) Tell the class that they are going to make a Kansas badge that they can wear. Remind them of the sunflower badges at the rodeo George Morehouse attended in Colorado.

Have students make a sunflower badge by sandwiching twelve petals between two brown circles.

- ± Hand out to each student a piece of brown paper containing two circles. Have them cut these out.
- ± Hand each student a yellow copy of worksheet #4, The Sunflower Petals. Have them cut out each of the petals and place them in two piles of six each.
- ± Place glue around the edge of one brown circle. Place six of the petals around the edge of the circle.
- ± Place a small amount of glue on the same brown circle and the bottom edge of the petals already glued on. Place the last six petals around the edge of the same brown circle in between the first set of petals.
- ± Place some glue on the second brown circle and lay it on top of the sunflower petals.
- ± Punch two holes in the brown center part of the flower to thread yarn or string through. Tie ends together to make a sunflower badge to hang around the neck.
- ± Use the chalk to write Kansas on the center of the sunflower.



- 3) Once the sunflower badges are complete gather everyone together to look at themselves as a group. Remind them that George Morehouse first thought of nominating the sunflower as the state flower when he saw a group of people from Kansas wearing sunflower badges.

Ask them how they think the sunflowers look all together and if they think the sunflower was a good choice to be our state flower.

EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

- 1) Using scissors, glue, sheets of paper for a base, and an assortment of yellow, brown, and green materials such as magazine pages, scraps of wrapping paper or wall paper, or construction paper have students "create" their own sunflowers without using patterns.
- 2) This activity may be made easier by:
 - ± Cutting the petals out ahead of time. This may be done fairly quickly by folding strips of paper small enough to accommodate one petal. Cut the petal from the folded paper to make several at once.
 - ± Punching holes in the petals once the flower is finished. Note: these will tear easier than if they are punched through the center with its glue providing added support.



- 3) Glue sunflower seeds to the centers of the sunflower badges and talk about how they are used. Mention that these seeds come from a different kind of flower than the state flower.
- 4) Use cloth to make the centers for the sunflowers. Glue the petals onto a circle of cardstock first. Once this is done glue the fabric onto both sides of the flower.
- 5) Plan a field trip to a sunflower field in the fall.

