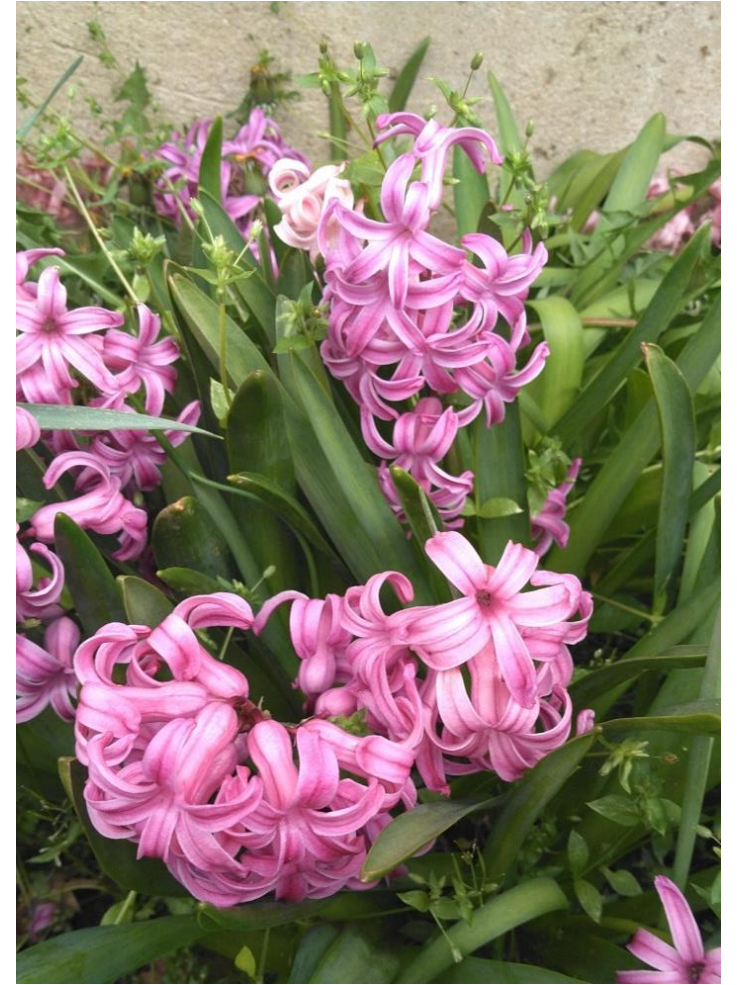
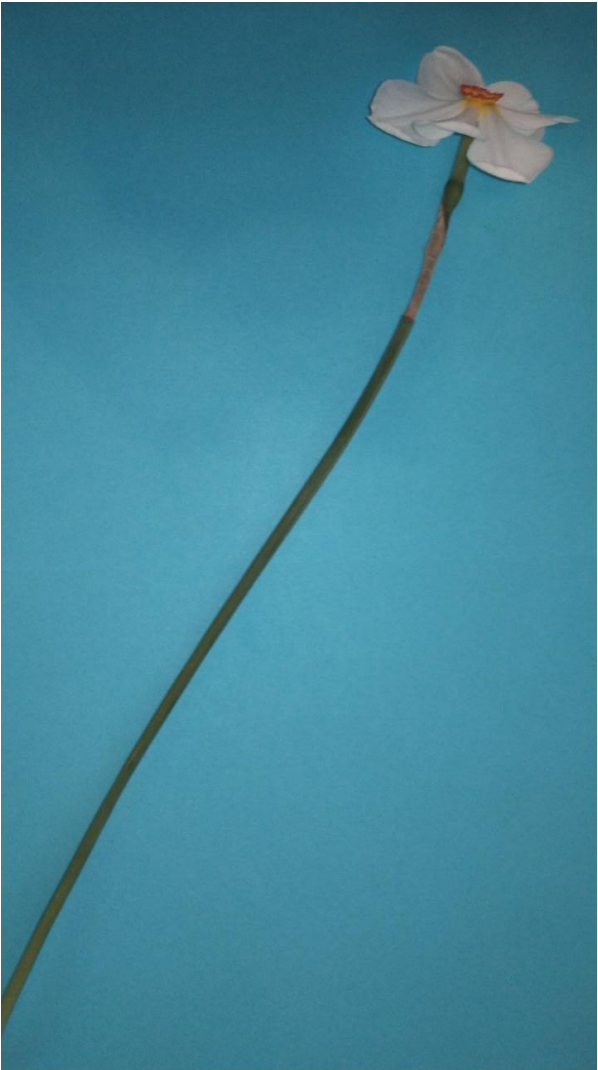


What makes a Flower a Flower?

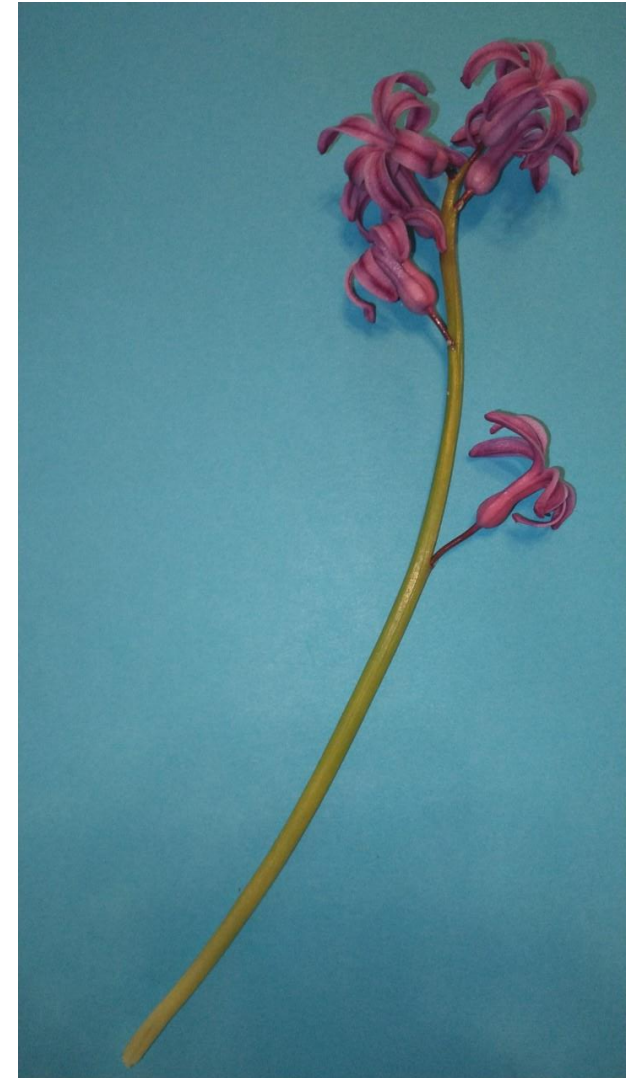


A flower is defined as the seed-bearing part of a plant, consisting of reproductive organs that are typically surrounded by a brightly colored petals and green sepals.



So, are these pictures of a flower or are they pictures of something else?

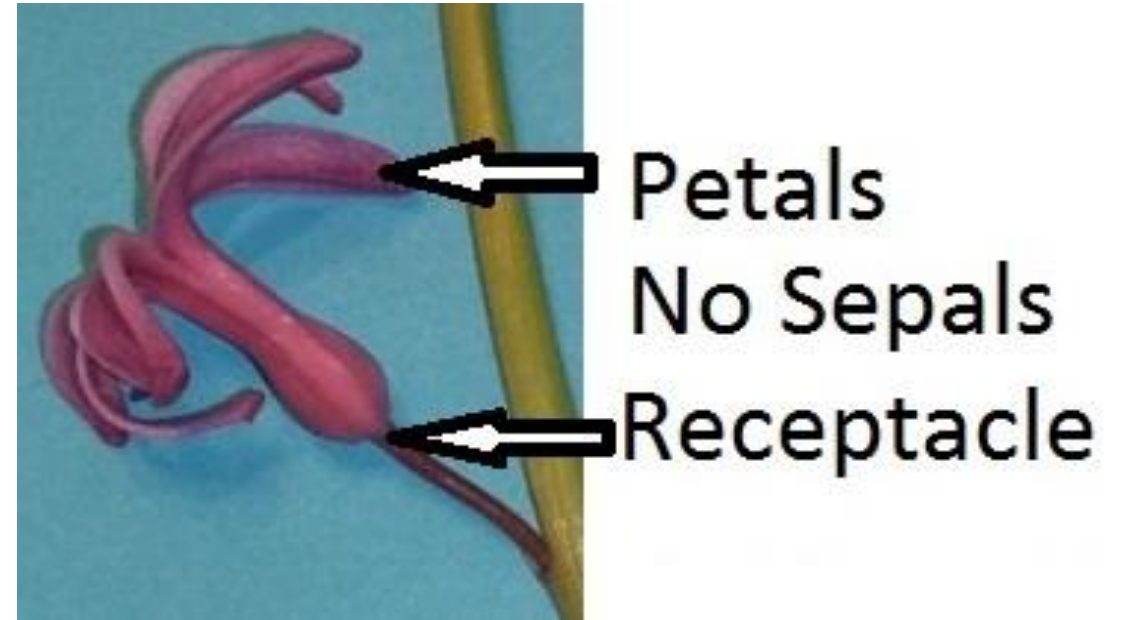
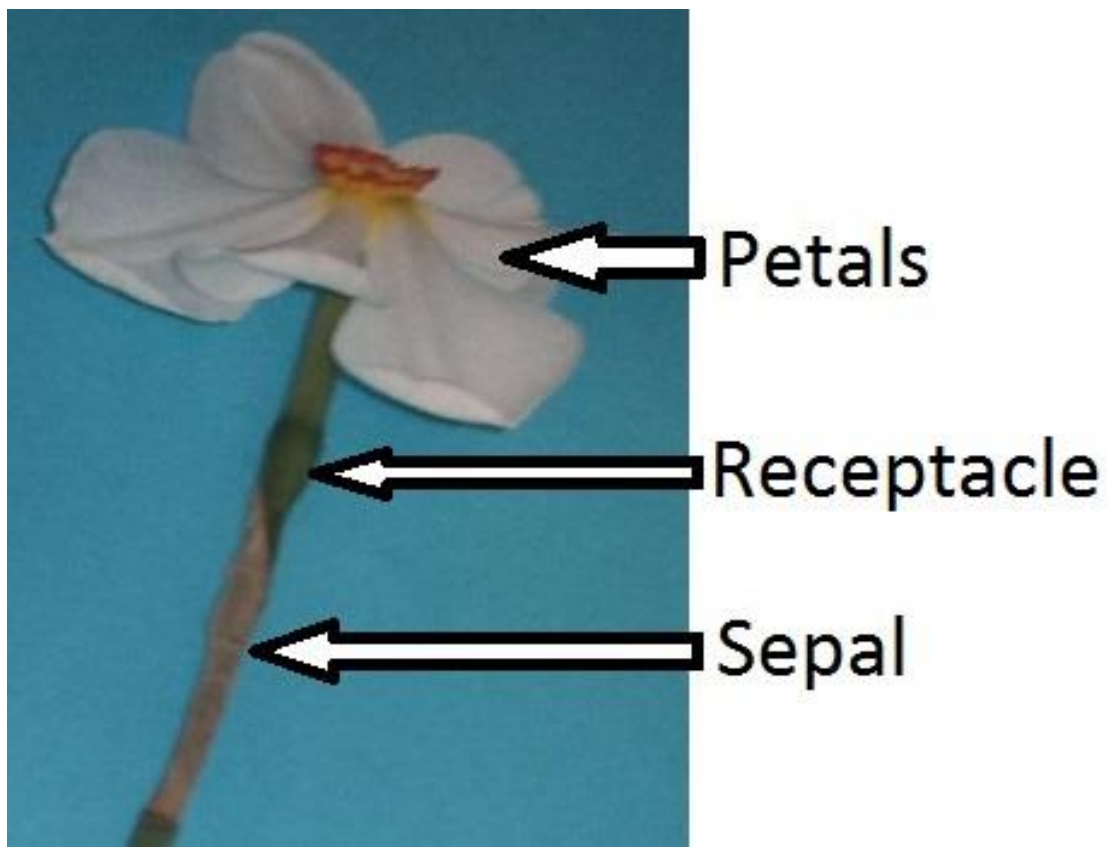
They are technically pictures of two plants because both pictures also include the stems as well as the flowers.



Here are close ups of the flowers for both plants.



So what are the parts that make up a flower?

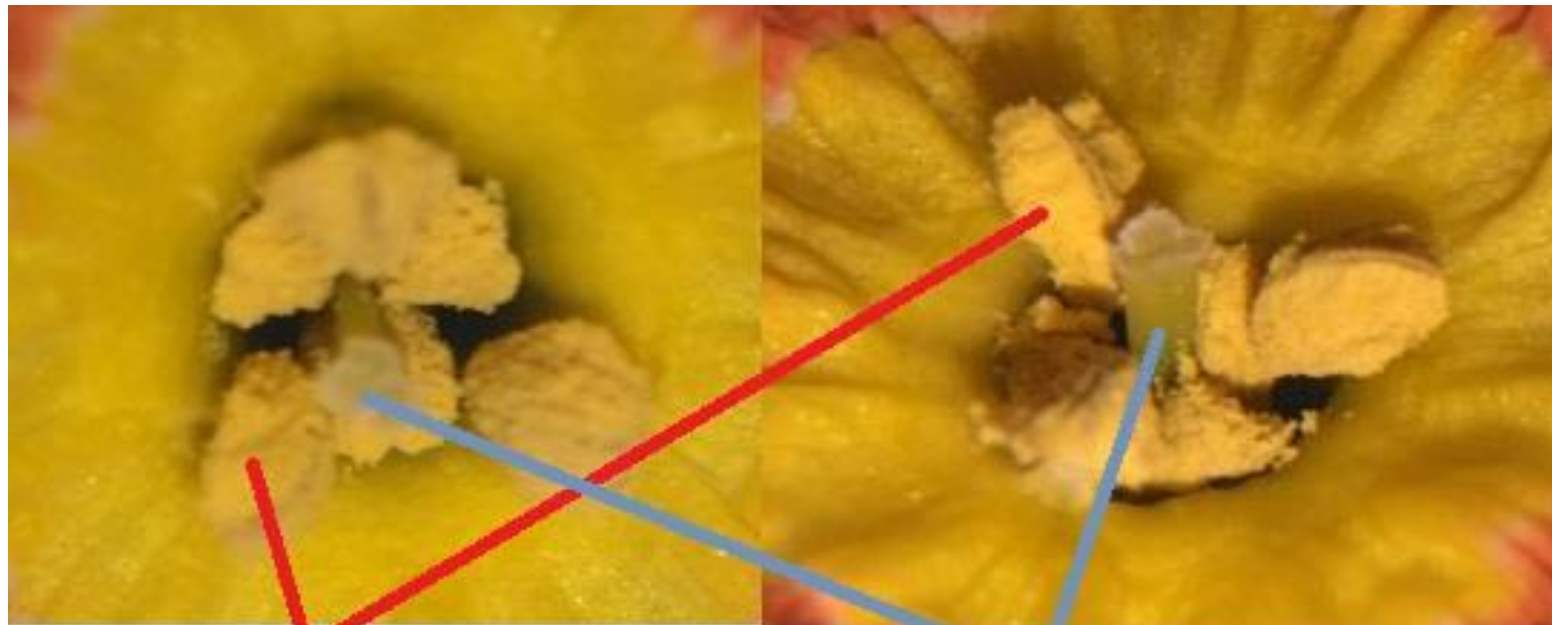


- Petals are modified leaves that surround the reproductive parts of flowers.
- Sepals are a whorl of modified leaves that enclosed the petals and formed a protective layer around the flower while in bud.
- Receptacle is the thickened part of the stem from which the flower organs grow.

Can a flower have a gender?

Inside the flower are parts called Stamen and a Pistil.

- Stamen are considered the male fertilizing organ of a flower, typically consisting of the pollen.
- Pistil is the female organ of a flower and will form the fruit/seed in time.

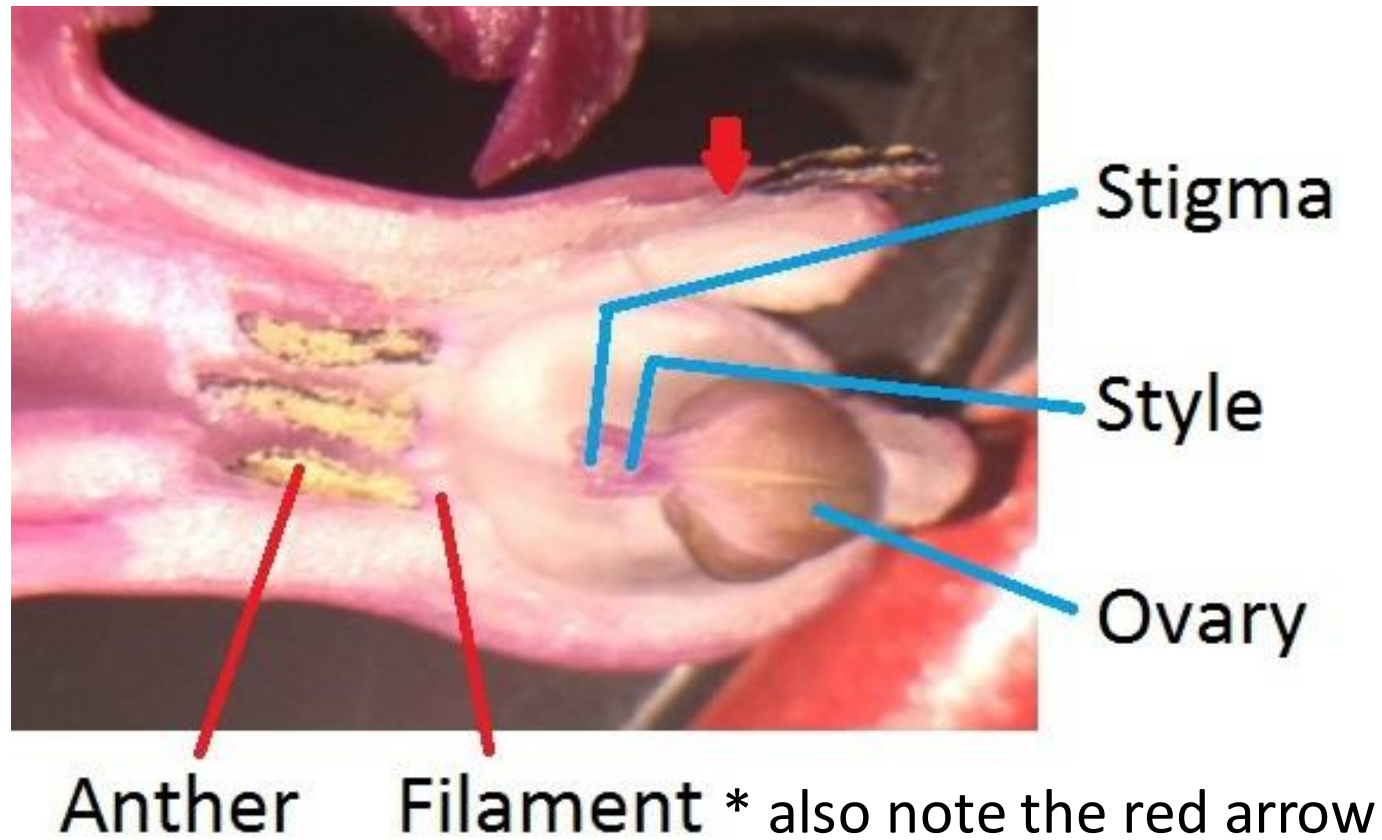


Stamen

Pistil

Stamen are divided further into the **anther**, the part that holds the pollen, and the **filament**, the stem that supports the anther.

The pistil is divided into three sections. The **stigma** is the part that receives the pollen. The **style** is the narrow extension of the pistil. And, the **ovary** which is the base of the pistil and develops into the fruit/seed of the plant.



Most "Ornamental Flowers" will have both Stamen and Pistils. But there are plants that will have flowers with only stamens or pistils. These consist of several tree species such as Hollies and Ginkos and agricultural plants like squash and spinach.



Now that you know what makes a flower a flower, take a closer look the next time you "stop to smell the roses." There is probably more diversity in flowers than any other group with the exception of the insect world. Flowers are any area worth investigating for thier diversity as well as their fragrances.

