

Poison Garden

Upper-Intermediate level



Task 1. Warm-up

Look at the pictures. How can they be connected?



Task 2. Lead-in

Follow the [link](#), look at the main picture and answer the questions:

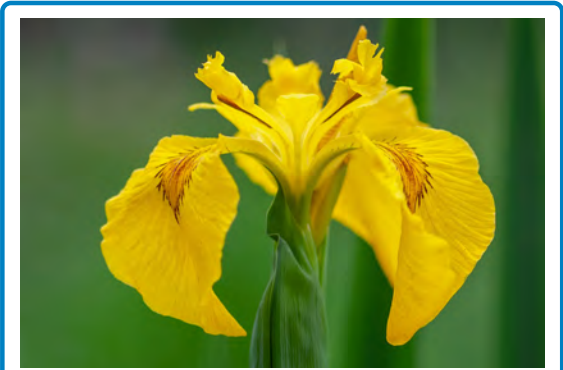
1. Have you heard about this kind of garden? What is unusual about it?
2. Why do you think this garden exists?
3. Do you dare to enter it?



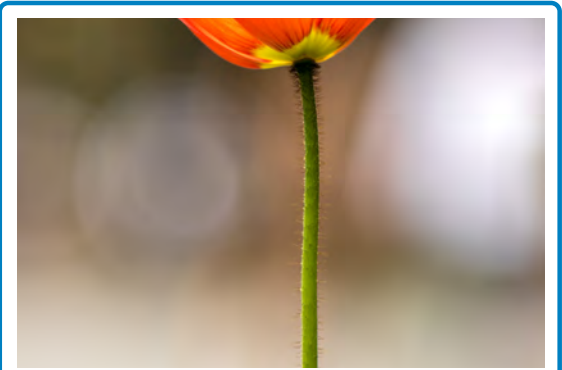
Task 3. Plant parts

Match the words to the pictures.

1. stem 2. leaf 3. bud 4. flower 5. roots 6. seeds



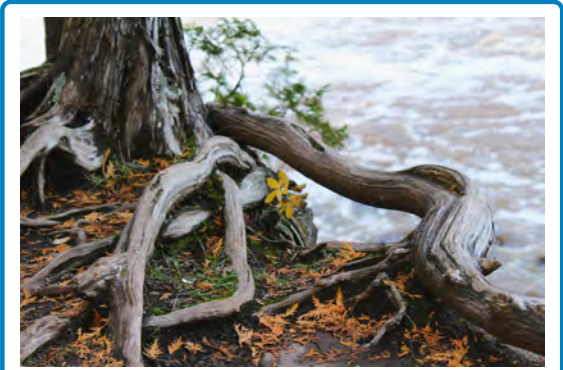
a)



b)



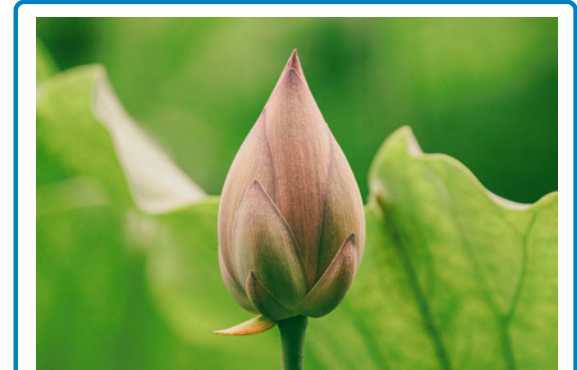
c)



d)



e)



f)

Task 4. True or False

Watch the [video](#) about the Poison Garden at Alnwick Castle in England. Read the sentences below. There is only one true statement. Find it and correct the false ones.

1. The majority of the plants in the garden at Alnwick are poisonous.
2. There are around 95 poisonous plants in the garden.
3. The gardeners always wear special protective clothes when they tend the plants.
4. The garden was developed to educate people about poisonous plants.
5. There are lots of poisonous plants in people's gardens.
6. Most of the visitors to the gardens realise how dangerous plants can be.



Task 4.1. Adjectives

Look at the names of some poisonous plants from the garden:

Atropa Belladonna • Datura • Aconitine • Laurel • Giant Hogweed

Watch the [video](#) again and then answer the questions:

- How do they effect on humans?
- What are some dangerous plant parts? Name them with the adjectives used in the video.



Task 5. Reading

Open the [article](#) about the most poisonous plants in the UK.

Look at the pictures of the plants first, choose one of them and try to guess how dangerous it is. Then read the information about the plant and think of adjectives that can describe it.

Make sentences with these adjectives and their adverbs.

For example, Wolfsbane are extremely dangerous. People's life will be in extreme danger if they eat even a very small amount of this plant.



Task 6. Writing

Choose one of these situations and write a short text.

Imagine that you have visited the Poison Garden at Alnwick. Your friend is an owner of the garden. He asks you to write a review for their website about your impressions. You should be very honest and say what you liked/didn't like about your visit.

Try to use comparative and superlative forms as much as possible.

Imagine that you have applied for a gardener job in the garden at Alnwick. You have already passed the first two stages of an interview and now you need to pass a final exam to get this job. Your task is to create a poster with advice about keeping safe around poisonous plants for parents or small children, pet owners and junior gardeners. Explain two things that each group should or shouldn't do.

Additional task: Interesting facts

Watch the [video](#) about the Poison Garden from a vlogger Tom Scott and name the facts that surprised you the most.

Some poisonous plants were used by people.

Name at least 2 stories about it told by a gardener.



Keys

Task 1.

There are dangerous plants in our planet that can harm you, and even kill.

Task 3.

1. – b; 2. – c; 3. – f; 4. – b; 5. – d; 6. – e

Task 3.

1. **False** - All plants are poisonous; 2. **True**; 3. **False** - they cover some parts of their skin when they deal with particularly dangerous plants; 4. **Not mentioned** - It was said to be created to be more interesting than a normal garden; 5. **True**; 6. **False** - They don't realise the impact these plants can have.

Task 4.1.

- a) Atropa Belladonna kills you. / Datura puts you to sleep forever. / Aconitine kills you. / Laurel produces cyanide and kills you. / Giant Hogweed burns your skin and gives you blisters for up to seven years.
- b) wonderful blue flowers, dangerous parts / crushed up berries, leaves, root and stem, phototoxic plant

Additional task:

In Italy, especially around Venice, ladies used to squeeze the berries of *Atropa Belladonna* to get the juice and then use the juice to put in their eyes to dilate their pupils to make them look more attractive to gentlemen. As it is toxic, slowly you start to lose your vision.

Victorians used to use leaves of Laurel. They cut it in two, popped in a jam-jar with the butterflies that they had captured, screw on the lid and the butterfly would die naturally because of the cyanide poisoning.

Victorian ladies would grow the *Brugmansia* on their tea tables and then invite ladies around for afternoon tea. What they would then do is in the teapot, shake some of the pollen which would go into the tea and then the ladies would start to loosen their tongue slightly and talk about all sorts of nonsense.

Mandragora is a very popular plant because of the Harry Potter phenomenon. Historically, people used to think that there was a live little man underneath the plant, because if you dug the plant up, the actual tap root would often have two little legs and a little arm and so people imagined that it was the devil himself. Often people said they could hear screaming as it was pulled up.