

Welcome to the May Activities Pack



Below are a mixture of activities and ideas, some are harder than others.
Feel free to choose the ones you like the look of or give them all a try!

Please use the 'talking point' boxes to think or talk about the subjects
covered.

Any ideas, suggestions or comments for future Activity Packs would be
welcome.

Nature Quiz

- 1) Bees can't see the colour red - True or False?
- 2) How tall is tallest Sequoia tree in the world?
 - a. 52 metres
 - b. 83 metres
 - c. 115 metres
- 3) How many noses does a slug have?
- 4) Which is England's fastest land animal?
 - a. Red deer
 - b. Brown hare
 - c. Grey squirrel
- 5) The juice from bluebell flowers was used historically to make glue - True or False?
- 6) What is the most common plant in the countryside in the UK?
 - a. Nettle
 - b. Cow parsley
 - c. Burdock
- 7) The first carrots grown were purple in colour - True or False?
- 8) How many years can a snail can sleep for?
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
- 9) How many varieties of apple are there in the UK?
 - a. 250
 - b. 1100
 - c. 2500
- 10) What percentage of the UK is covered in woods and forests?
 - a. 13%
 - b. 21%
 - c. 35%

Blockbusters

Can you work your way through this blockbuster?



G

What **G** refers to the point at which a seed undergoes physical changes and begins to grow?



A

What **A** describes a plant that completes its entire life cycle in one season?



R

What **R** is England's national flower?



D

What **D** has a yellow flower that turns into a puff ball?



E

What **E** is a type of plant that prefers acidic soil and will not grow successfully in alkaline soils?



N

What **N** is a treacherous stinging weed but can be put to use in food or tea?

Talking point: Are you green fingered?

Flower Song Quiz

Can you match the artist to the song?

You Don't Bring Me Flowers

The Foundations

Tulips from Amsterdam

Max Bygraves

Kiss from a rose

The Beatles

Build me up buttercup

Jimmie Rodgers

(I Never Promised You A)
Rose Garden

Barbara Streisand and
Neil Diamond

Octopus's garden

Seal

English Country Garden

Julie Andrews

We'll gather lilacs in the spring

Lynn Anderson

Talking point: Are there any songs that you enjoy that are about flowers or gardens?

Wordsearch

FOXGLOVE

THISTLE

LUPIN

LILY

VIOLA

PEONY

FUCHSIA

POPPY

LAVENDER

ALLIUM

VERBENA

HEATHER

B	V	P	A	D	H	E	O	L	I	L	Y
P	E	O	N	Y	G	D	K	X	T	A	V
E	R	P	F	U	C	H	S	I	A	V	I
L	B	P	A	T	H	I	S	T	L	E	O
P	E	Y	F	S	Q	L	U	P	I	N	L
K	N	P	A	L	L	I	U	M	B	D	A
J	A	E	F	N	H	E	A	T	H	E	R
H	F	O	X	G	L	O	V	E	Z	R	I

Talking point: What colours can you see outside? Do you have favourite garden plants or flowers?

May Facts

May is the month of spring in the Northern Hemisphere but Autumn in the Southern Hemisphere.

May's birthstone is emerald, which signifies love and success.

May actually has two birth flowers – the Lily-of-the-Valley and the Hawthorn. The Hawthorn flower is a symbol of hope, while the Lily-of-the-Valley represents the return of happiness and sweetness.

May also has two Zodiac signs, Taurus and Gemini. People born under the sign of Taurus are said to be ambitious and smart, yet trustworthy. Those born under the sign of Gemini are said to be passionate, adaptable, and smart.

The month May was named after the Greek goddess Maia, who is also identified with the Roman goddess of fertility.

May was once considered a bad luck month to get married. There is a poem that says "Marry in May and you'll rue the day".

Maypoles have been present in the UK since at least 1350 AD. Celebrants would erect a long pole and attach flowers, garlands, and strips of fabric to it, around which certain dances would take place.

May is the month that the Eurovision song contest is held every year. Eurovision is an international song contest that has been held every year since 1956. Some of the contest winners over the years have gone on to be incredibly successful groups, with the most notable being ABBA!

Lighting Up Art Corner - Spring Has Sprung!

The activities for May are all to do with nature, particularly Spring flowers and blossom. Once you have begun you can take the suggested ideas and starting points in any direction you like. There are no rules. Let your imagination run riot!

1) Flower Power Pattern

This can be done with watercolour pencils, paints, or coloured felt tips. Collect some different flowers or blossom. Look at the flower heads and on an A4 piece of paper (or bigger if you prefer) draw one of the flower heads anywhere on the paper. Concentrate on the shapes and colours and when you have finished the first one go on to do more being aware of the spaces in between the shapes in order to achieve a balanced overall design. Do not worry too much about how realistic each flower looks as the aim is to create a lively and eye-catching pattern. You could finish the design by decorating the spaces in between each flower with anything you like; (for instance, tendrils with leaves attached, relevant words or doodles.)

2) Flower Power Collage

To make this you will need a piece of coloured paper as background, although white will be fine. If you have any gardening magazines you can cut out flower images from these, or colour magazines can be used. Just find areas of colour in the photographs and cut out flower shapes. Alternatively any other coloured papers can be used. You could mix and match all three. As in the previous suggestion the idea is to build up a pattern or design on your background paper. Arrange your flower shapes until you are happy with the way the design looks and then stick them down. The spaces in between could be decorated with more cut out shapes or drawn ones.

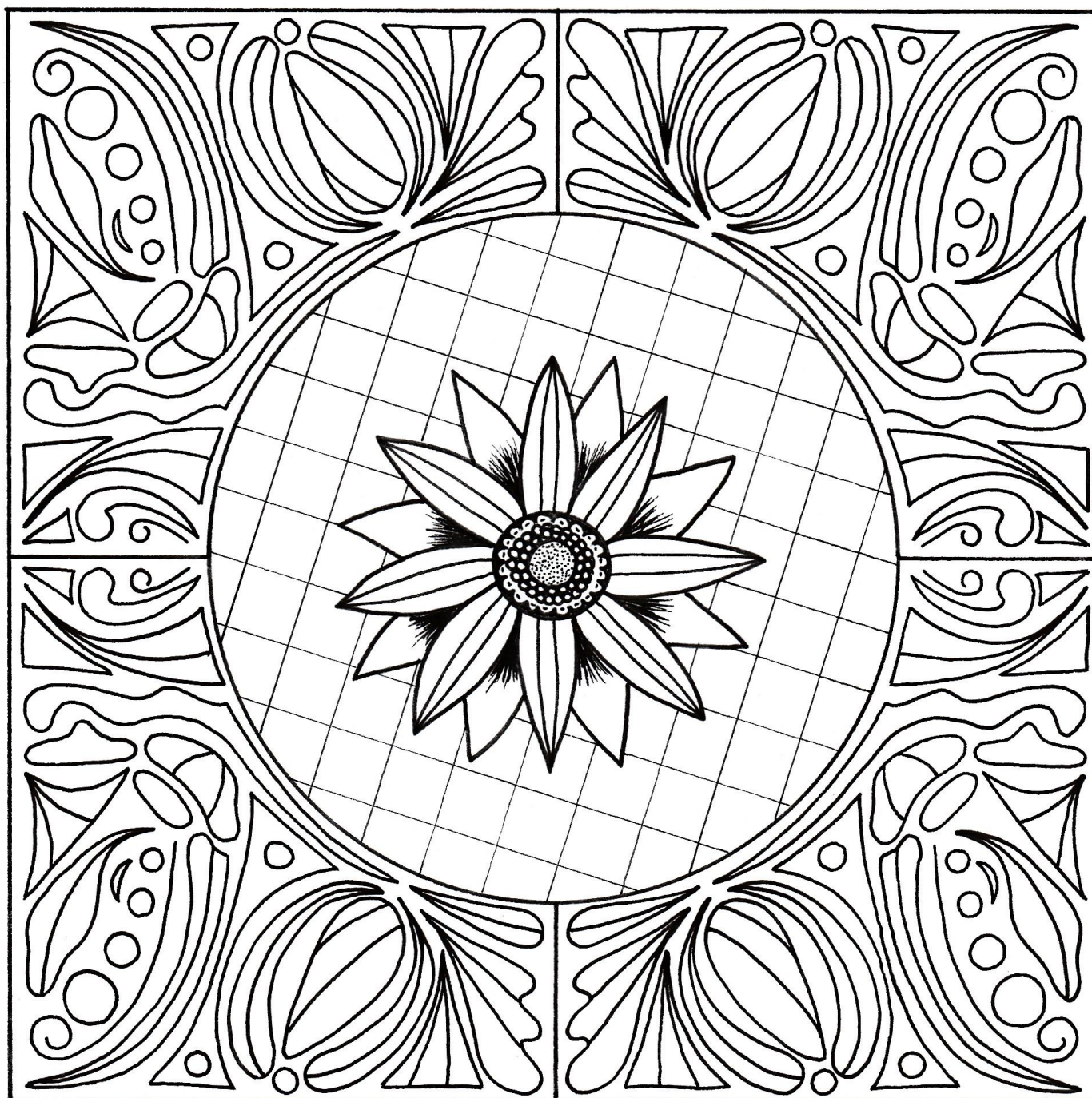


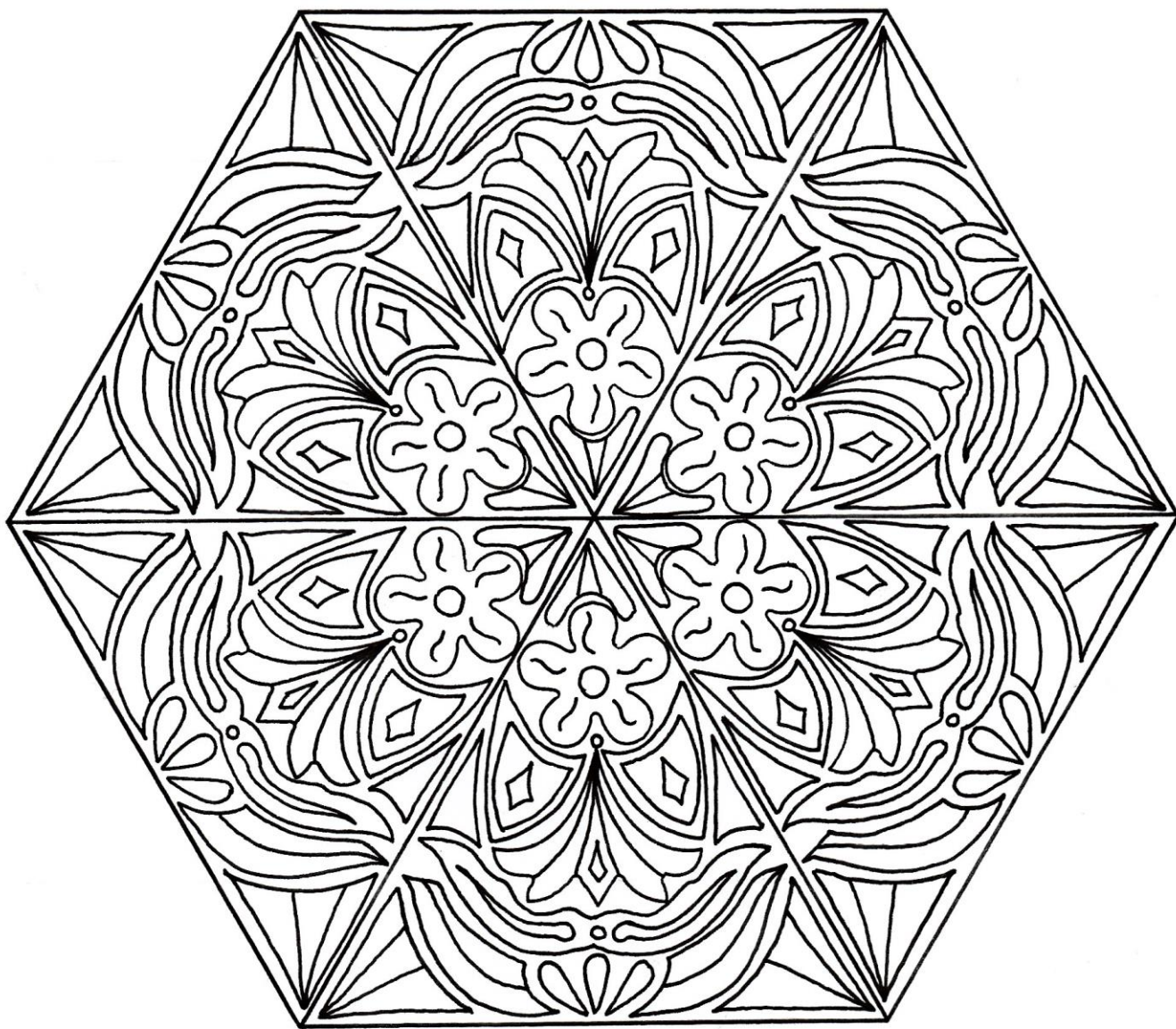




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Herbs Word Scramble

Can you unscramble these spices?

YEMHT

— — — — —

RERAOMYS

— — — — —

RAGANTOR

— — — — —

VEHSIC

— — — — —

GOANERO

— — — — —

ASEG

— — — — —

SIALB

— — — — —

NIMT

— — — — —

YLREPSA

— — — — —

Talking point: What herbs do you like? Are there any herbs you dislike? Have you grown any herbs?

Sudoku

The goal is to fill the rest of the 9x9 grid with single-digit numbers 1 through 9 with the following basic restrictions: A number can only be used once in each row, column, and 3x3 cell.

			8		5			
	3			6				7
	9				3	8		
	4	7	9	5		3		
				7	1		9	
			2			5		
1					2	4	8	
		9					5	
					6			

Talking point: What games do you enjoy? Do you prefer number or letter puzzles?

Wordsearch

HERON

SPARROW

PIGEON

EAGLE

ROBIN

SWAN

RED KITE

OWL

JACKDAW

WREN

DOVE

DUNNOCK

D	A	T	S	H	R	O	B	I	N	J	L
R	E	F	P	I	G	E	O	N	C	N	D
E	K	S	A	R	D	A	B	I	S	V	U
D	H	E	R	O	N	G	X	S	W	A	N
K	G	N	R	O	W	L	F	Q	J	U	N
I	Z	B	O	H	F	E	D	O	V	E	O
T	I	D	W	R	E	N	V	Z	B	G	C
E	H	E	N	J	A	C	K	D	A	W	K

Talking point: What birds can you see outside? Can you hear birdsongs? Do you recognise the bird by it's call?

Song Time

English Country Garden (Traditional Version)

How many kinds of sweet flowers grow
In an English country garden?
We'll tell you now of some that we know
Those we miss you'll surely pardon
Daffodils, heart's ease and flox
Meadowsweet and lady smocks
Gentian, lupine and tall hollyhocks
Roses, foxgloves, snowdrops, blue forget-me-nots
In an English country garden

How many insects come here and go
In an English country garden?
We'll tell you now of some that we know
Those we miss you'll surely pardon
Fireflies, moths, gnats and bees
Spiders climbing in the trees
Butterflies drift in the gentle breeze
There are snakes, ants that sting
And other creeping things
In an English country garden

How many songbirds fly to and fro
In an English country garden?
We'll tell you now of some that we know
Those we miss you'll surely pardon
Bobolink, cuckoo and quail
Tanager and cardinal
Bluebird, lark, thrush and nightingale
There is joy in the spring
When the birds begin to sing
In an English country garden

7 Fascinating Facts

Plants and Gardens

1. Roses – Shakespeare made references to roses on over 50 occasions.
2. Trees – Trees can produce up 260 pounds of oxygen annually and absorb up to 1 ton of CO₂ (carbon dioxide) in a lifetime.
3. Prince Charles – Each year he is given one daffodil as rent for land on the Isles of Scilly
4. Soil – The composition of 1 table spoon of soil has more organisms than the entire world population.
5. Tomatoes, there are more than 10,000 varieties and it has 31,760 genes, this is 7,000 more than human beings. They belong to a family of plants that include the potato, pepper and deadly nightshade.
6. There are about 27 million gardeners in the UK! Out of a population of 65 million, that's an extraordinarily high proportion – around 41%.
7. Garden gnomes were brought to England from Germany in 1847 by Sir Charles Isham. He hoped they would attract real gnomes to his garden!



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Gardening Quiz

- 1) Name a flower that also shares its name with a part of the eye?
- 2) The cutting out of unwanted or dead parts of a shrub or tree is known as what?
- 3) What is a type of plant that regrows every year called?
- 4) Climbers, ramblers and standards are all types of what?
- 5) What are mint, marjoram and thyme types of?
- 6) What is mulch used for?
- 7) True or False - Gnomes are banned at the Chelsea Flower Show?
- 8) "Mary, Mary quite contrary how does your garden grow". What did Mary grow in her garden in the nursery rhyme?
- 9) What is the name of the butterfly often seen around the greens in a vegetable garden?
- 10) Butterhead, Cos and Little Gem are all types of what?

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Strange English Bank Holiday Traditions

As we approach summer and the quick succession of bank holidays, below are some of England's more unique events.

Many are steeped in tradition and can be traced back for centuries.

Dorset Knobs



Dorset knobs are usually eaten with Blue Vinney cheese or honey and clotted cream - known as thunder and lightning

Last year more than 700 "biscuit athletes" entered the throwing competition in Dorset which attracted more than 5,000 spectators.

The Dorset Knob Throwing contest in Cattistock - between Dorchester and Yeovil - involves participants tossing a locally made, triple-baked biscuit to the best of their ability.

The spherical missiles have to be thrown underarm and one of the competitor's feet must remain on the ground for it to count.

The unique biscuit has been made by the Moores family since 1880.

The idea of throwing them came to Mr Collins in 2008 as he searched for a "unique selling point" to help raise money for local sporting facilities. "I suddenly said 'I've got it, we can throw Dorset knobs'," he said.

Other events at the Frome Valley Food Festival include a knob eating contest, a knob and spoon race, a knob-a-thon and knob darts.

Sweeps Festival

May Day was the one time of year the child chimney sweeps could dust off the soot and have some fun!



The boys would awaken the Jack-in-the-Green - a seven-foot character - at dawn on Blue Bell Hill, Chatham before parading through Rochester, Kent, collecting money.

But when the Climbing Boys' Act 1868 made it illegal to employ young boys to carry out the trade, the tradition began to fade and the final May celebration was held in the early 1900s.

After being revived in 1981 by keen historian Gordon Newton, the modern day Sweeps Festival recreates the event with a colourful mix of music and dancing.

"It dates back to the 1700s when the industrial revolution occurred," Mr Newton said.

"There was a big requirement for climbing boys and every year on May Day they traditionally used to celebrate it, by taking the Jack-on-the-Green around the city with the climbing boys.

"It was restricted to the south-east of England and was clearly reported as something that went on in the city of Rochester. The event now is unique and a genuine tradition associated with Rochester."

Cheese Rolling



A foam 'cheese' was used in 2013 after police told the cheese maker she could face legal action!

This extreme event has been going for more than two centuries and attracts participants and audiences from across the world.

Daredevil cheese chasers hurl themselves down the notoriously steep - 1:2 gradient - Cooper's Hill in Gloucestershire as they try to catch a wheel of Double Gloucester cheese. Inevitably they tumble down to the bottom, with few staying upright.

The first written evidence of cheese rolling was found in a message to the Gloucester Town Crier in 1826, although it is clear that the event was by then an old tradition.

Jean Jefferies, who has written a book about the event, has said she can trace the event back even further. "We have family recollections recorded which take us back to the mid-1700s," she said.

"The story from then describes it as an event that was ongoing even at that time - no mention of it just starting... so it was probably a very local event."

The official event was axed in 2009 but has been held unofficially ever since by local enthusiasts.

Shin-Kicking (The Cotswolds Olimpicks)



Shin-kicking is believed to have evolved from a form of Cotswold Wrestling

Shin-kicking is one of the regular favourites at the Cotswolds Olimpick Games, as it has been featured there for over 400 years!

Competitors face each other with just a bit of straw padding for protection. Sizing each other up the rules state one must hold onto the opponent and kick their shins until they fall to the floor, under the watchful eye of the stickler, or referee.

The aim is to weaken an opponent by kicking his or her shins and once the legs have been weakened, a competitor may throw an opponent to the ground. Believe it or not, it is not as painful as it used to be. In years gone by participants wore iron-tipped boots and broken legs were the norm!

The event was started in about 1611 by Robert Dover, according to chairman of the games society, Graham Greenall.

"It was almost a snub to the puritan attitude of the time, he just wanted people to enjoy themselves. Shin-kicking evolved from a variety of Cotswold wrestling."

The Cotswold Olimpicks are held on the Friday after the Spring Bank Holiday, where attendances have been more than 5,000.

Tetbury Woolsack Races



Competitors race up Gumstool Hill in Tetbury carrying 60lb woolsacks

The races have no greater aim than for people to demonstrate their strength and fitness by racing while carrying a sack of wool - up and down a hill that reaches a gradient of 1:4.

"It's supposed to have started in the Middle Ages. Drovers taking their animals to market went to have a drink in one of the local pubs and wanted to show off their prowess to their girlfriends," said one of the organisers, Stephen Hirst.

Tetbury Woolsack Races are a big part of Gloucestershire's history. Every May thousands of people line the streets of Tetbury - which thrived in the Middle Ages as a market for wool - to watch those willing to race between the Crown Inn pub at the top of Gumstool Hill and the Royal Oak at the bottom.

Men have to carry a 60lb (27kg) woolsack, while women are presented with a woolsack just over half that size.

Talking point: How were Bank Holidays celebrated where you grew up?

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Poem

The Flower **by Lord Alfred Tennyson**

Once in a golden hour
I cast to earth a seed.
Up there came a flower,
The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went
Thro' my garden-bower,
And muttering discontent
Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall
It wore a crown of light,
But thieves from o'er the wall
Stole the seed by night.

Sow'd it far and wide
By every town and tower,
Till all the people cried
'Splendid is the flower.'

Read my little fable:
He that runs may read.
Most can raise the flowers now,
For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,
And some are poor indeed;
And now again the people
Call it but a weed.

Nature Quiz Answers

- 1) True
- 2) c. 115 metres
- 3) 4
- 4) b. Brown hare
- 5) True
- 6) a. Nettle
- 7) True
- 8) c. 3
- 9) c. 2500
- 10) a. 13%

Herbs Scramble

Thyme
Rosemary
Tarragon
Chives
Oregano
Sage
Basil
Mint
Parsley

Blockbusters Answers

G – Germinate
A – Annual
R – Rose
D – Dandelion
E – Ericaceous
N – Nettle

Pair the song to the artist

We'll gather lilacs in the spring - Julie Andrews
Tulips from Amsterdam - Max Bygraves
Kiss from a rose - Seal
Build me up buttercup - The Foundations
You Don't Bring Me Flowers - Barbara Streisand and Neil Diamond
Octopus's garden - The Beatles
(I Never Promised You A) Rose Garden - Lynn Anderson
English Country Garden - Jimmie Rodgers

Gardening Quiz

- 1) Iris
- 2) Pruning
- 3) Perennial
- 4) Roses
- 5) Herbs
- 6) Suppressing weeds and holding in moisture around plants or in the vegetable garden. It can be bark chippings, straw, leaves or small pebbles.
- 7) True
- 8) Silver Bells and Cockle Shells and Pretty Maids all in a row
- 9) Cabbage White
- 10) Lettuce