

FORSYTHIA ACTIVITY SUITE

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THE FRAGRANT FORSYTHIA?

First, try your hand at labelling the parts of a forsythia flower!

Forsythia are deciduous shrubs typically growing to a height of 1–3 m. The leaves range between 2-10 cm; are borne oppositely and usually are simple but can sometime be trifoliate; and their margins can be serrated or smooth. The branches may be hollow or chambered, depending on the species.

Forsythia Flower Diagram



Stamen

Sepal of
Calyx

Petal of
Corolla

Pistil

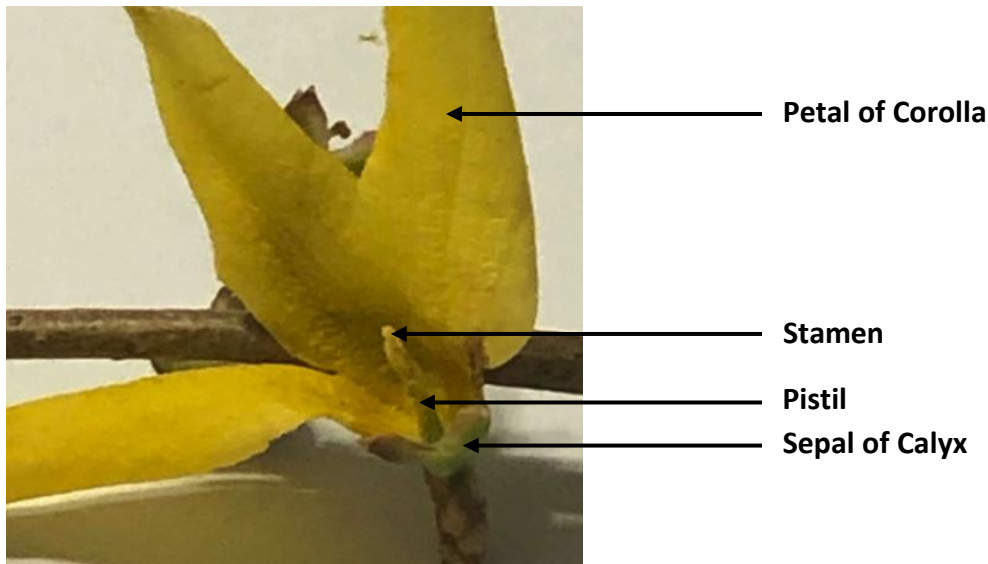
Forsythia Quiz

1. Some German towns pay people who notify them of the date that forsythia blooms first appear in their communities. Can you name some industries that would find this info to be very useful?
2. Several Ontario municipalities have all planted the same species and variety of forsythia next to their main office buildings – why?
3. What effect does our changing climate have on pollinator insects such as bees and butterflies and how does this impact our farm crops and our gardens?
4. Why do people plant forsythias, knowing that most of the year it is a green-leaved shrub?
5. What is the common name of the classification group to which the forsythia belongs?
6. Most species of forsythia are native to what region of the world?
7. The forsythia genus is named after William Forsyth who lived in th1700's – who was he?
8. Forsythia branches are used for making bows for the ajaeng, a stringed instrument from which country?

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ANSWER KEY

Labelled Forsythia Flower Diagram



Forsythia Quiz Answers

1. Farmers, fruit growers, pharmaceutical companies (think allergy medication production) and construction industries, just to name a few, all benefit from local indicators that spring has arrived.
2. Planting the same species and variety of forsythia makes for easier tracking of conditions across the province. Municipalities gain a frame of reference for planning spring events and eliminate one variable from their observations.
3. Historically, flower bloom times and pollinator hatch times were the same or coincided, with flowers providing food for the pollinator insects and the pollinator insects helping fertilize the flowers. With our changing climate this timing is at risk of being out of sync which means that insects, and other animals including humans will need to change their food source and/or activities or starve.

Pollinators such as bees, butterflies and flies, or birds such as the hummingbird, move from flower to flower and spread pollen by accidently rubbing against the stamens as they try to reach the delicious nectar. Interesting facts about bees: they collect pollen in their hind leg to feed their hive queen and can carry up to 50% of their body weight as pollen!

Forsythia Quiz Answers *continued*

The successful transfer of pollen in and between flowers of the same plant species leads to fertilization, successful seed development, and fruit production.

Think of trees you see every day such as maple, pine, and oak. Think of cultivated or native fruit and nut trees such as apple, chestnut, and peach trees. Think of field crops such as corn, soybeans, potatoes, blueberries, alfalfa, and canola. All of these depend on pollination for their species to survive.

4. Forsythia is a popular shrub because it is one of the first to flower in the spring plus its bright yellow blooms help us celebrate the end of winter. Then, after the flowers are gone, it provides all the ecosystem benefits of other shrubs and trees plus can be used as a physical and sound barrier if grown as a hedge.
5. The forsythia belongs to the Olive family (Latin: Oleaceae).
6. Most of the known species of forsythia are native to Eastern Asia.
7. The forsythia was named after William Forsyth (1737–1804), a Scottish botanist and a founding member of the Royal Horticultural Society.
8. The ajaeng is a Korean string instrument. It is a wide zither with strings of twisted silk and a bow that is made out of a slender branch of forsythia.

