

Labelling your plants is essential if you want to keep track of what you have sown or planted, and the labels can be long-lasting, attractive and unique if you make your own. Clay and metal are ideal media for this, and allow the labels to be formed in all kinds of imaginative shapes like flowers, leaves or fruits. You can also make ceramic flowers to decorate your flower beds year-round as a permanent artistic feature of the garden.

## CURRICULUM LINKS

### Foundation Stage 1,2,6

### Art & design

KS1 – 1ab, 2abc, 3ab, 4abc, 5abcd

KS2 – 1abc, 2abc, 3ab, 4abc, 5abcd

KS3 – 1abc, 2abc, 3ab, 4abc, 5abcd

### Design & Technology

KS1 – 1abcde, 2abcde, 3ab, 4ab, 5abc

KS2 – 1abcd, 2abcde, 3abc, 4a, 5abc

KS3 – 1abcde, 2abcde, 3abc, 4bcd, 7b

### Science

KS1 – SC1, SC2, SC3

KS2 – SC1, SC2, SC3

KS3 – SC1, SC2

KS4 – SC1

## HOW TO MAKE Ceramic Flowers

Meldreth Manor Special School made several life-size sprays of ceramic flowers on strong metal stems and planted them amongst the living flowers in one of the beds of the Growing Schools Garden.

You can make your own clay flowers of any kind to serve as beautiful and permanent decorations in your school grounds, and with care they will last indefinitely.

For ceramic flowers you will need modelling clay, tools for shaping and cutting the clay, wire and beads for making stamens and pistils, glue and paint, and strong wooden or metal stakes to serve as the stems.

Roll out the clay like pastry. Cut into large flower shapes – flat ones like daisies, bells for daffodils or bluebells. A whorl shape like arum lilies is also effective and stable.

Gently shape the edges into curved petals, taking care not to cut too deeply into the centre. Stamens and pistils made of beads on metal wire can be added if desired.

Make a hole in the base of the flower if fixing it on top of a stem, or pierce a hole in the tops of those which will hang down like a bell from the stem. When finished, rest them on a suitable support and leave to dry.

If you have access to a kiln, fire them before glazing. When they are fully dry, glaze and refire them.

Make stems of painted metal strong enough to support the weight of the flowers. Attach firmly to stems with superglue or thread through the holes you have made. Plant your everlasting flowers in suitable positions to enhance your flower beds year-round.

## HOW TO MAKE Clay and Metal Plant Labels

### Clay labels

Roll out the clay and cut suitable shapes, eg roundels for flowers, rectangles for vegetables, or simple leaf shapes.

While the clay is still wet, incise flower petals into roundels, press leafy herb twigs (eg rosemary or thyme) into flat surfaces, or inscribe plant names or the name of your school onto plaques.

Crimp the edges (like pastry), and add a twisted roll to finish off. Make a hole in the base or through the top in which to locate a wooden or metal supporting rod once the label is dried or fired.

Dry or fire the labels if you have access to a pottery kiln. Then glaze and dry or refire. Fix securely onto support stakes with superglue. Alternatively bend some stout wire into a shepherd's crook shape and hang your labels from the hook at the end.

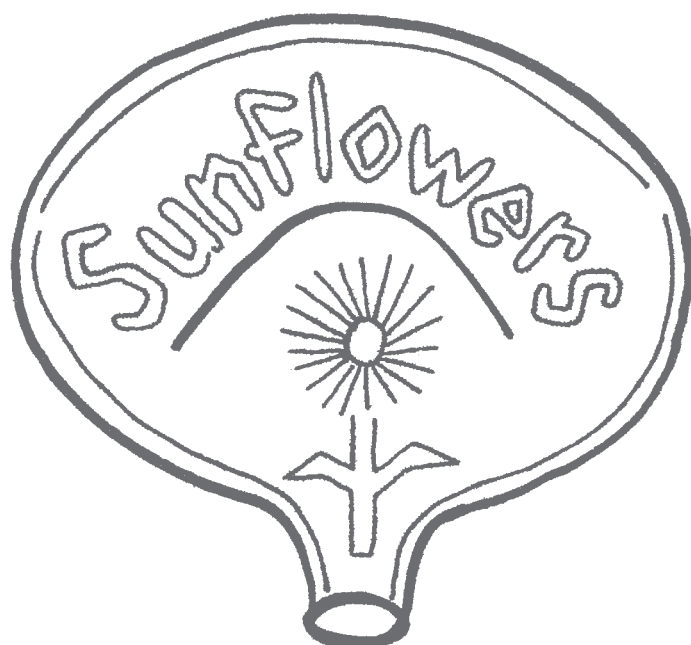
### Metal labels

Cut out leaf or flower shapes using tinsnips, or use precut shapes in copper or tin. Decorate with enamel paint or simply paint with nail varnish. Write on the names and if necessary cover with clear varnish. Fix securely onto metal rods or wooden canes with superglue and stake them in the earth next to your plants.

Enamelled metal label



Incised ceramic label



#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Suppliers of clay and pottery making materials: **POTTERY CRAFTS** ☎ 020 7720 0050 [www.potterycrafts.co.uk](http://www.potterycrafts.co.uk)