

Impatiens Observation

Presented at the New Jersey Science Convention - 2001

Submitted by Catherine Ambros

Day 1: freshly-picked flowers (Impatiens work well because they will root) in a flask only instruction is to "describe."

Evaluates students' ability to write in science-analyze for parts of speech, return with suggestions for the next day.

Day 2 or 3: Students look for changes. Plants usually start to lose flowers. Discuss with class what types of things went into description. Give students a diagram of a flowering plant to label. Require proper terms from here on in.

Day 4: Students describe again, predict how plants will look in 1 week (plants are frequently looking droopy, flowers falling.) Stress proper names, metric measurement.

2nd Week: Usually have new buds, possibly new flowers. Some plants starting to root. Pick one characteristic you can measure and record over the next few weeks.

Teacher grades journal for 1) proper lab journal format 2) clarity of description 3) use of metric measurements 4) use of units in measurement.

3rd and subsequent week: measure stated characteristic weekly. Make correct journal entries. Use proper units for measurements.

Wrap-up: Create a data table for measurements. Graph data. Draw conclusions about what a plant needs to survive.

Extension: Once plants are well established, you can put nutrients into some flasks and not in others to see if there is any difference.

Science in real life: One entire class had spider mites infest their plants. The class has been given the task of choosing a new subject for long-term observation. Stay tuned for further developments.