Science & Plants for Schools

Student Sheet

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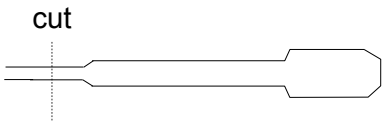
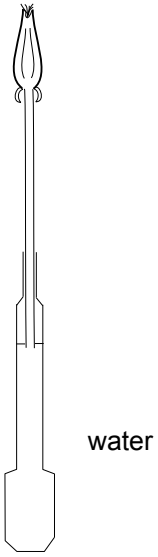
Investigating Gravitropism

1. Take a long straight dandelion stem, in bud.

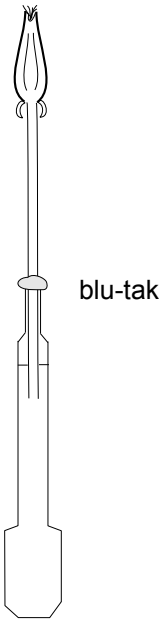


2. Cut the end off the pipette so you can push the dandelion stem inside

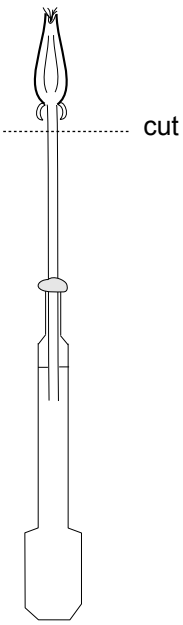


3. Hold the pipette under a tap to fill it with water.

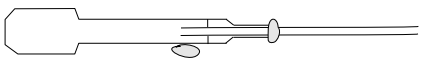
Push the stem into the pipette so the end is in the water.



4. Gently wrap blue-tak around the join between the stem and the pipette, to stop water leaking out.



5. Cut the head off your dandelion at the top of the stem.



6. Lay your stem down horizontally, and wedge it in place with blu-tak.

In the real world:

Understanding gravitropism is vital for scientists researching the future of space travel. Plant scientists at NASA and the Japanese space programme are researching how plants will grow in the low gravity of a space station, where they can potentially produce both oxygen and food.