

SUNFLOWER PROJECT – TOQIKUTIMK (TOGETHER WE ARE GROWING): OUR CHILDREN, OUR SUNFLOWERS

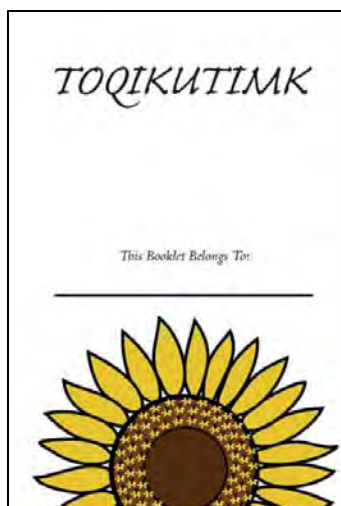
- 2003-2007
- youth outreach plus language revitalization - community-based, participatory action research - health research

In 2003, the Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health (IAPH) within CIHR awarded a research grant to Cheryl Bartlett for a project entitled "Integrative Health and Healing: co-learning our way to expanding wholeness through restoration of relationships with the land". Mi'kmaw Elders in this project worked with researchers to envision outreach activities that could pilot the Elders' belief that children need experiential learning with and in the natural world. Elders felt that such helps stimulate a child's senses of creativity and interconnectiveness and this, in turn, would then help to encourage the child understand that healthy, creative life options are there to recognize, choose, and follow once they get older.



One of the major activities we decided upon was the "sunflower project" - a hands-on activity to help inspire imagination, cultural awareness, community relationships, and positive personal growth. The project was brought to life largely through the work of artist Basma Kavanagh and graphic

designer Kristy Read who created a colourful and visual booklet for children that could guide them in the planting of sunflower seeds and encourage them to provide TLC (tender loving care) after the seeds germinated and while the young plants grew.



The booklet also encouraged children to make observations and drawings of the sunflowers through the spring, summer and fall seasons and to involve family, teachers, RCMP officers, and other community members in their project. Our hope was that the children, i.e. the *sunflowers' care givers*, would learn to see some of the relationships that the plants form within the larger web of life ... and more: that the *sunflower care givers* would also come to see the young plants' relationships as similar to the caring relationships that they, the children, have and can draw upon within their own home community. Mi'kmaw Elder Murdena Marshall provided Mi'kmaw translations for the booklet's numerous illustrations and Youth Outreach Worker Andrew Sark distributed the book to a few thousand children in elementary schools in Cape Breton and elsewhere during 2005 and 2006.

The booklet can be viewed in the pages that follow. It is important to note, however, that we provide two versions. The first is in the correct page order. The second, with better quality images, is in the page order appropriate for double-sided printing.



Andrew spoke about the sunflower project and his other youth outreach activities at the 2006 "Healing Our Spirits Worldwide" conference held in Edmonton, AB. Look for his presentation in the articles and presentations section of our website; Andrew's is in the 2006 year category and is listed alphabetically: Sark, A.

In addition to the enabling funding from Cheryl's CIHR research award, the sunflower project received supportive funding from the Mounted Police Foundation (MPF) in the form of a community grant to print 5000 copies of the sunflower booklet (our sincere thanks to the Eskasoni First Nation Detachment of the RCMP who supported our application). And, an additional research grant to Cheryl Bartlett from the IWK Health Centre Foundation enabled hiring a youth outreach worker.

TOQIKUTIMK

This Booklet Belongs To:




















Everything in nature is connected: the people, trees, rocks, flowers, fish, bugs and birds. We are part of that connection through our family, our community, and our spirituality. The sunflower, like you, is part of those connections. The field where the sunflower grows is like the home where you grow. Use this Booklet to record all the happy memories you will have learning, growing and sharing with your sunflowers.



TOQIKUTIMK

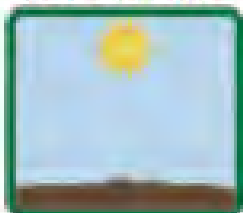
LET'S GROW TOGETHER

-  I am a seed that's starting to grow.
-  *I am a seed that's starting to grow.*
-  I am growing, I am safe.
-  *The Earth is healthy and I will be great.*
-  It's time to greet my Mother.
-  *Now I will sprout and greet my Grandfather.*
-  I am very small and need my family.
-  *I am fragile and need my shelter.*
-  My family gives me food and hugs so I grow.
-  *Mother Earth and Grandfather Sun will help me grow.*
-  I grow strong, following my family's lessons.
-  *I grow strong following Grandfather across the sky.*
-  Now I am learning so I can help others.
-  *Now I grow seeds so there will be others.*
-  Now I share so others can know.
-  *Now I provide shelter so my young seeds can grow.*
-  It takes the whole family for young ones to grow; in addition to food and water, we need light and love in our home.

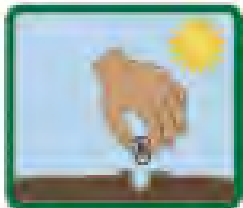
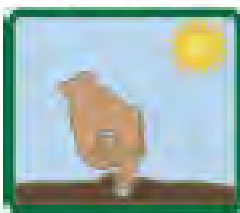
IKÁ'TAQUTE'N SKINMIN

[planting my seeds]

mkne'n ta'n tet
na'ku'setewik



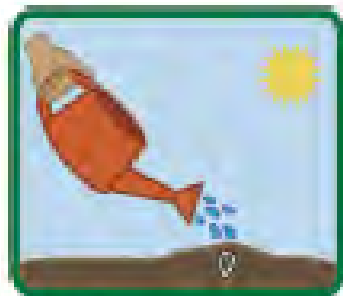
jila'te'n
maqamikew



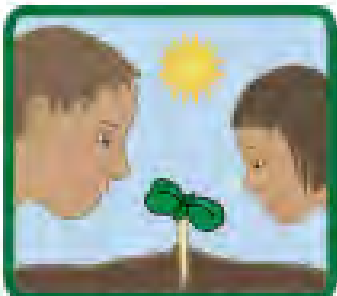
ikátaqawte'n
skinmin



anqute'mn



wtaqapatu



jikapte'n sqalian



MALIAPTE'N TA'N KISI IKÁ'TU'NL

[caring for my sunflower]

wula ketusamqwak



wula welikwek mita meski'k wtupn

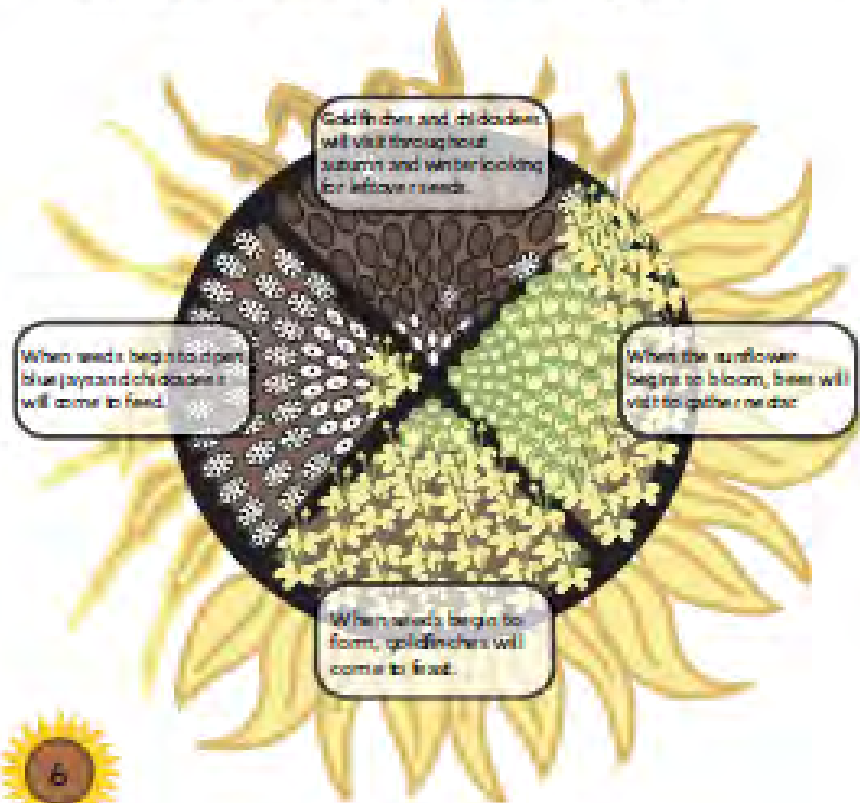


KEKNIUPUQEK

[sunflower seasons]

Sunflower Visitors in Different Seasons:

- In early summer, caterpillars visit the juicy leaves of the young sunflower.
- When the sunflower blooms, honey bees, bumble bees and wild bees will visit to gather nectar.
- Sometimes butterflies and beetles will visit.
- Leaf-hoppers and other insects often spend time on the underside of the leaf, drinking the juices of the plant.
- In autumn, as the seeds ripen, many birds will visit the sunflower: goldfinches, chickadees and blue jays love to eat the nutritious seeds.
- Squirrels like sunflower seeds too ... and if they can't reach the flowers, they will pick up seeds that the birds drop on the ground.



TA'NIK KESATMI'TI'J IKA'TAQN

[sunflower visitors]



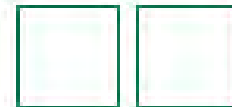
tities



atu'tuej



wapatjikej



po'ks



jaki'kes



iptoqnke'wj



temoqji'pilasit



amu



enkejit



NIASUEKML AQ WTANM

[my sunflower and my community]

draw inside your sunflowers

Nuji
Kina'mua'tijik
[school teachers]

Jiksu'k
[family]

Ta'nik
Ajjipjutu'tij
Wantaqo'ti Ten
[RCMP Officers]

Nitapk
[friends]

Toqi Kejik
[neighbours]

[me]

Ta'nik
Nusaptmi'tij
Mawi Kisitaqn
[natural resource guardians]

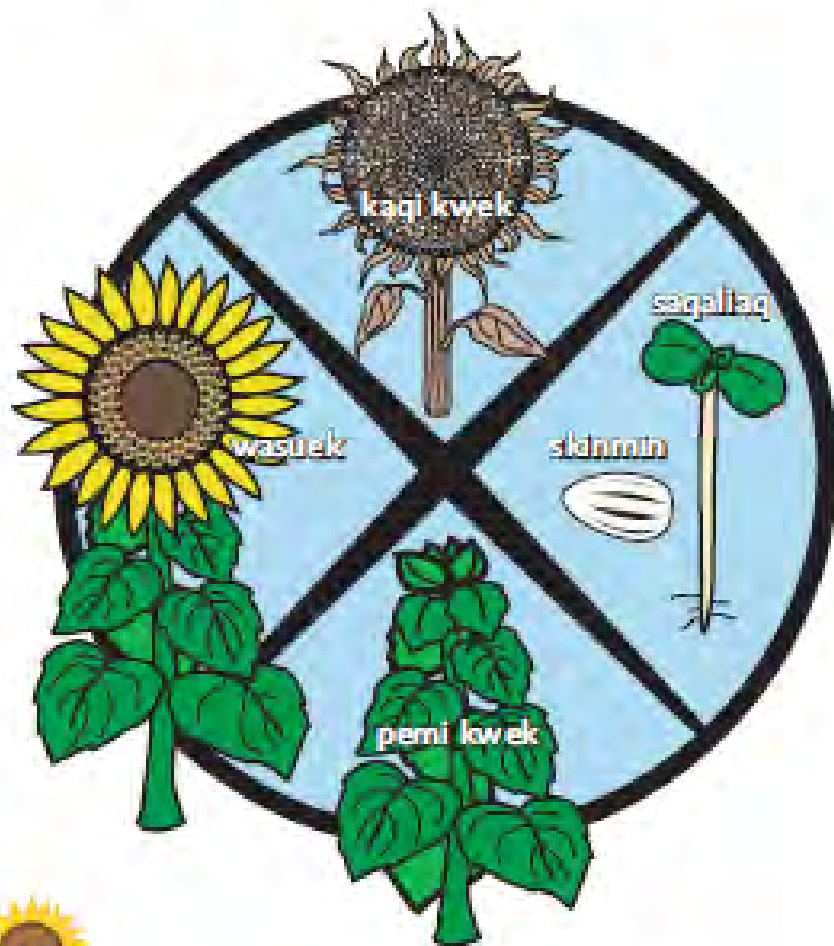
Nuji Npitaqtijik
[health care people]

Nuji
Toqomajo'tk
Mawi
Kisitaqn
[scientists]

TA'N TELI KWEK MESKI'K WASUEK

[my sunflower's growth]

The Medicine Wheel can help us to understand the life cycle of a sunflower.



EWIKASIK TA'N TELI KWEK KI WASUEKN

[my sunflower journal]

Ta'n skimmin kisi ika'tu'ni?

When did you plant your seeds? _____

Tami ika'taqm etek?

Where did you plant your seeds? _____

Ta'akl skimmin kisi ika'tu'ni?

How many seeds did you plant? _____

Draw the different kinds of seeds:

Ta'n saqalikaqsimni?

When did you see the first sprout? _____

Msi't saqaliq?

Did all of your seeds sprout? _____

Tali pitaqsiq kitasuekm ikaq newi erdie'wirik? (Msi't ikate'n.)

How tall was your sunflower plant after a week?

(If you have many plants, you can choose one or many.)

Katu newte'it tepuruset pa' mitej tal pitaq kitasu elni?

How tall was your sunflower after one month? _____

Tapusjik tepkrusetek?

After two months? _____

Ne'sjik tepkrusetek?

After three months? _____



WIKE'N TA'N KIASUEKM TELIK

[drawing my sunflower]

When did your sunflower flower?

How old was your sunflower when it flowered?

What did your sunflower look like? Use the Medicine Wheel to draw your sunflower as a seed, when it sprouted, when it was in full flower, and how it looked in winter.



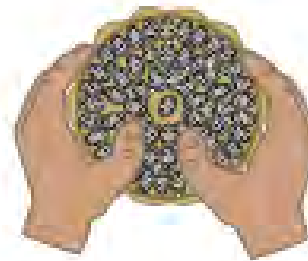
MENA'TAQUTMAN KSKINMINML

[harvesting my sunflower seeds]

When are the seeds ready to harvest?

They are ready when all the flowers fall off and the seeds become hard and dry. At this time the flower-seed head will turn yellowish and dry out. Pull out a seed with your fingers and try it! The seeds are very tasty.

how to harvest seeds in flower-heads:



You can use your thumbs to loosen the seeds,

or you can rub two flower-heads together to loosen the seeds,



or you can leave them for the birds to eat!



NAKU'SETL MIAMUJ NEMIATL NTASUEKM

[following the sun]



SUNFLOWERS ARE CALLED "SUN" FLOWERS BECAUSE THEIR YELLOW FLOWER-HEADS FOLLOW THE SUN'S PATH ACROSS THE SKY EVERY DAY.

Here are some ways that First Nations peoples used sunflower seeds:

- Seeds were crushed and mixed with grease and made into breads and cakes.
- Seeds were crushed and rolled into balls for a portable, nutritious snack.
- Seeds were used to thicken soups and make gravy.
- Seed covers were roasted and made into a coffee-type drink.
- Seeds were eaten to stimulate the appetite.
- Seeds were crushed into flour and used to make porridge, gruel and mush.
- Seeds were crushed to make an oily paste, like peanut butter.
- Seeds were dried and saved as a winter food.
- Seeds were used to feed livestock.
- Seeds were a prized source of oil: the oil was used for frying foods like dumplings and artichoke tubers (the roots of a different kind of sunflower). Also, the oil was also used for making paints and for making hair shiny.

MESKI'K WASUEK

[sunflower – a large flower]

The scientific name for sunflower is *Helianthus annuus*.

There are more than 50 species of sunflowers in North America.

Native Americans have been using sunflowers for food and medicine for at least 8000 years.

Native Americans have been cultivating the sunflower for at least 4000 years, but no one is sure where cultivation of the sunflower began.

SUNFLOWER AS MEDICINE:

Crushed plants were applied to snakebites and spider bites, and the juice from the plants was applied to cuts.

An infusion (a tea) of flower-heads was used to relieve chest pains.

The sap was chewed by Elders to diminish thirst.

Pieces of the stem were used for wart removal.

A decoction (a boiled tea) of the root was used to soothe rheumatism.

OTHER USES OF SUNFLOWER:

Seeds were used to make blue, red, and black dyes for baskets.

Petals were crushed to make yellow paint.

The bright yellow flowers were often used as decorations.

The tough stalks (stems) were sometimes used as building materials and as poles for beans to climb.

Sometimes the stalks were made into musical flutes!

Dried stalks were used as kindling for fires.

The fibres in the stalks were used to make bird snares.

Some people used the fibres in the stalks to make dolls.



Kids Helpline 1-800-668-6868

RCMP Detachments:

Baddeck - Wagmatcook	902-295-2350
Eskasoni	902-379-2822
Membertou	902-564-2885
Potlotek	902-535-2120
We'koqma'q	902-756-3371

NADACA	902-564-6466
Crisis Intervention	902-567-7767

Special thanks to Muredana Marshall for translations.

This project has been made possible by:



Royal Canadian
Mounted Police

Gendarmerie royale
du Canada

CAPE BRETON
UNIVERSITY



Canada Research
Chairs

Chaires de recherche
du Canada

Canada



TWK Health Centre
Foundation

KECCA

Centre de recherche en
épidémiologie et santé
communautaire



Atlantic
Institute of
Health
Research



CIHR IRSC
Canadian Institutes of Health Research



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

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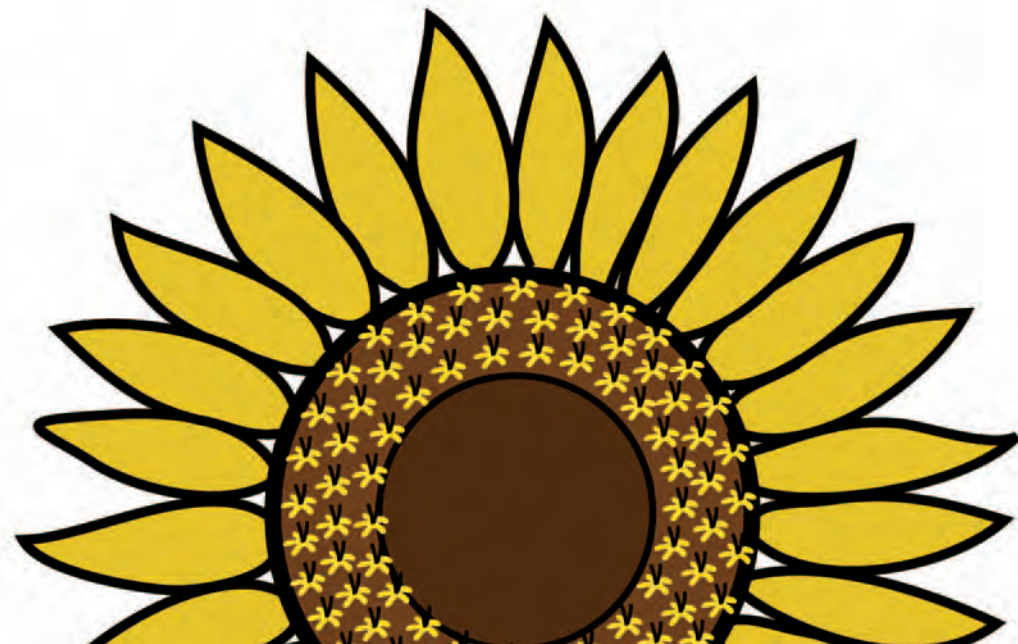
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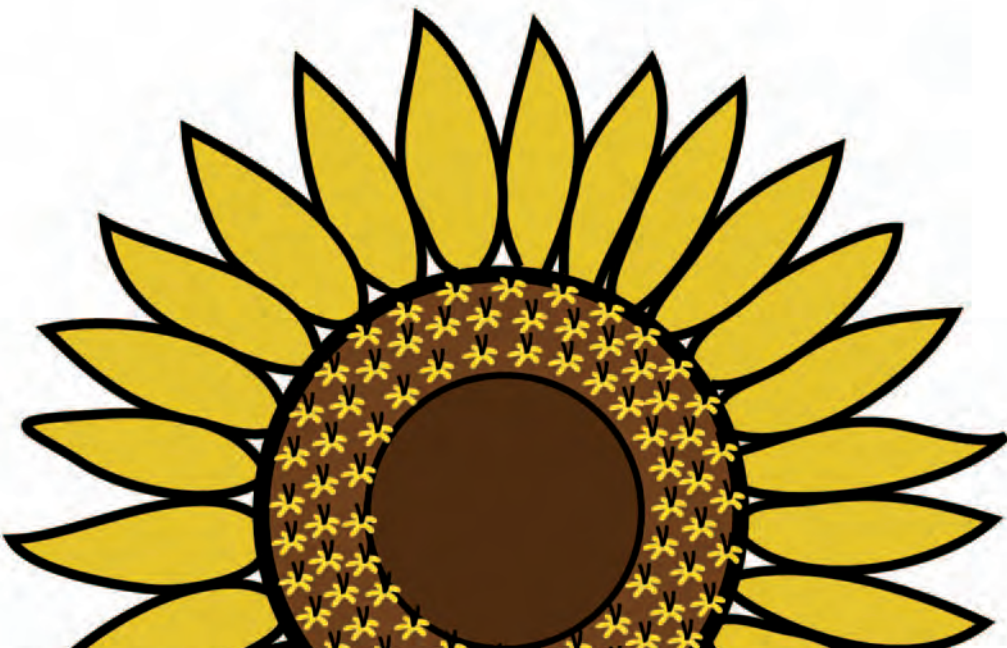
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TOQIKUTIMK

LET'S GROW TOGETHER

-
- The illustrations show a child's profile in a blue circle next to a sun in a yellow circle. The suns are arranged in a vertical line, representing the sun's path across the sky. The child's profile is on the left, and the suns are on the right.
- I am a seed that's starting to grow.
I am a seed that's starting to grow.
 - I am growing, I am safe.
The Earth is healthy and I will be great.
 - It's time to greet my Mother.
Now I will sprout and greet my Grandfather.
 - I am very small and need my family.
I am fragile and need my shelter.
 - My family gives me food and hugs so I grow.
Mother Earth and Grandfather Sun will help me grow.
 - I grow strong, following my family's lessons.
I grow strong following Grandfather across the sky.
 - Now I am learning so I can help others.
Now I grow seeds so there will be others.
 - Now I share so others can know.
Now I provide shelter so my young seeds can grow.
 - It takes the whole family for young ones to grow;
in addition to food and water, we need light and
love in our home.

IKA'TAQUITE'N SKINMIN

[planting my seeds]

mkne'n ta'n tet
na'ku'setewik



jila'te'n
maqamikew



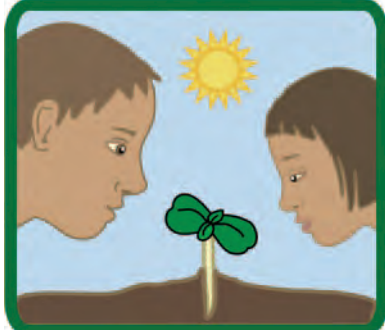
ikàtaqawte'n
skinmin



anqute'mn



wtaqapatu



jikapte'n sqalian

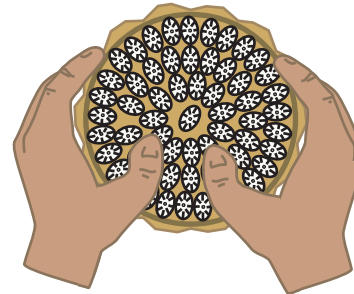
MENA'TAQUITMN KSKINMINML

[harvesting my sunflower seeds]

When are the seeds ready to harvest?

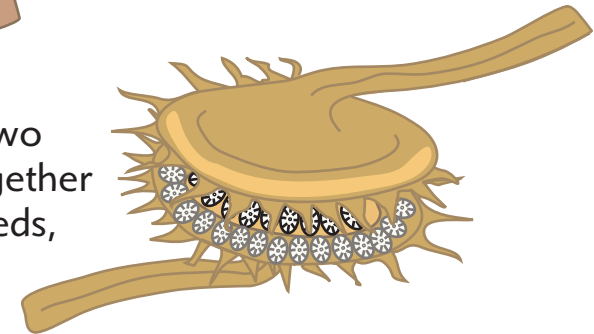
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how to harvest seeds in flower-heads:



You can use your thumbs to loosen the seeds,

or you can rub two flower-heads together to loosen the seeds,



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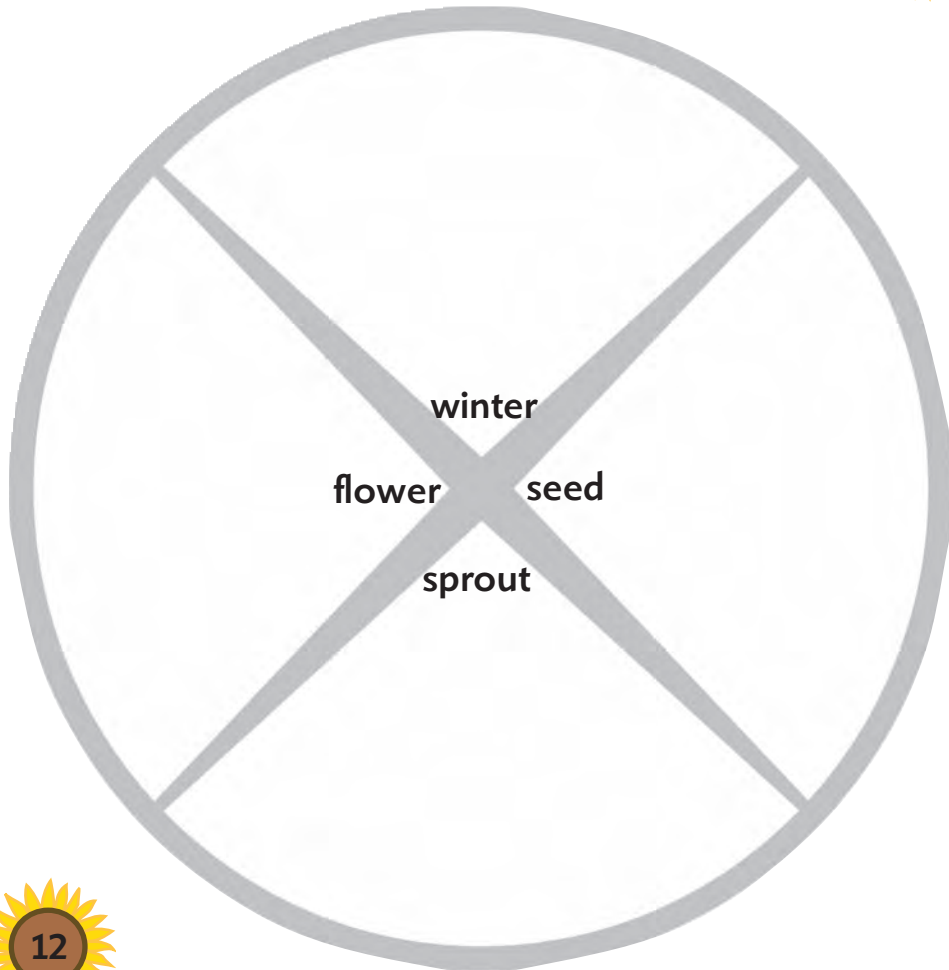
WIKE'N TA'N KTASUEKM TELIK

[drawing my sunflower]

When did your sunflower flower?

How old was your sunflower when it flowered?

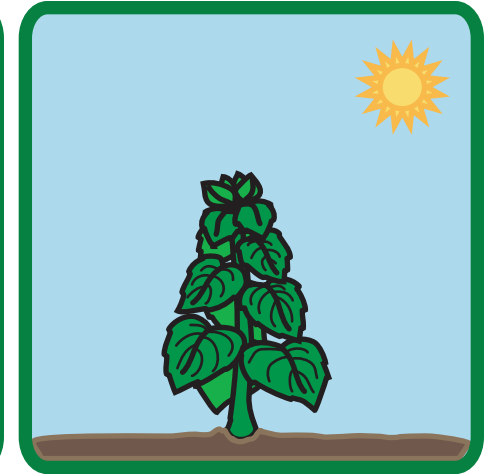
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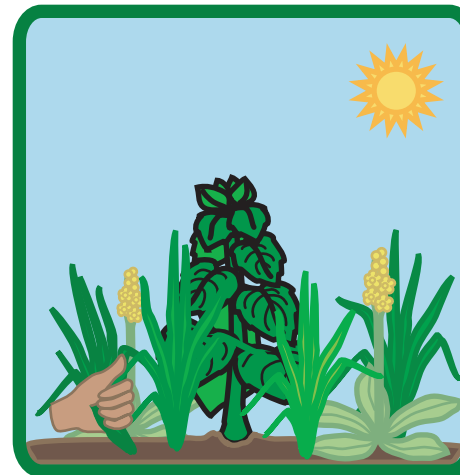
MALIAPTE'N TA'N KISI IKA'TU'NL

[caring for my sunflower]

wula ketusamqwaki



wula welikwek mita meski'k wtupn

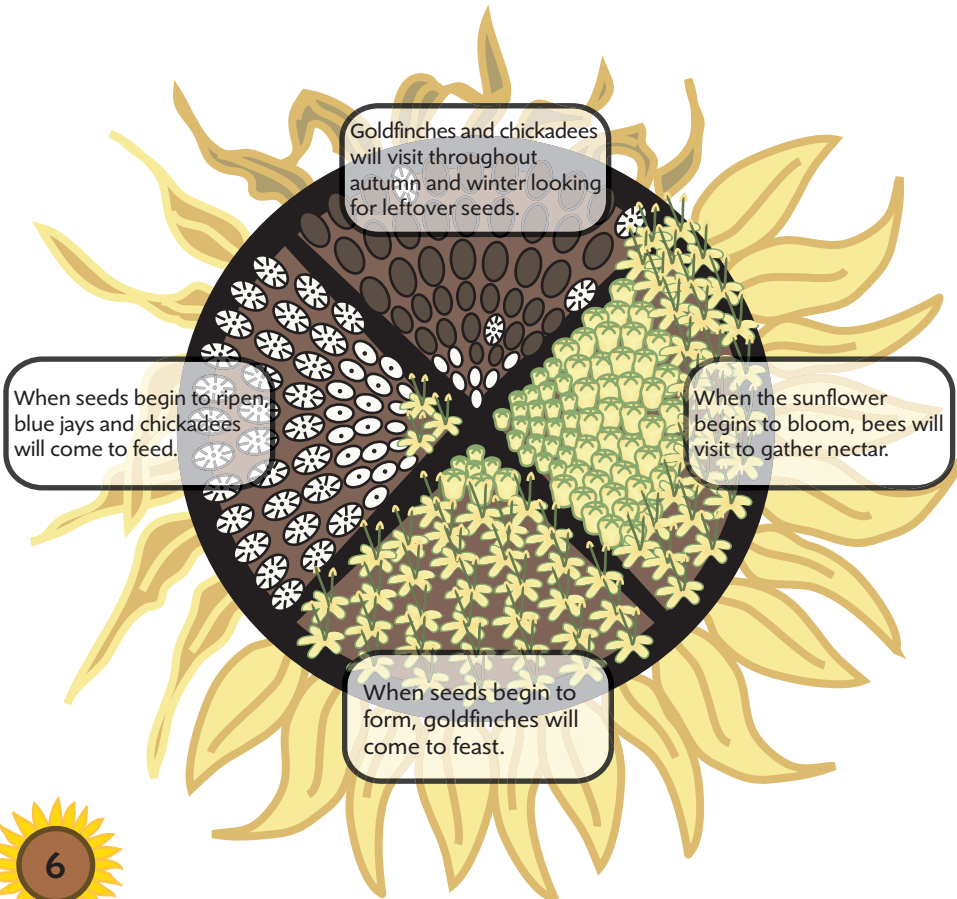


KEKNIUPUQEK

[sunflower seasons]

Sunflower Visitors in Different Seasons:

- ✦ In early summer, caterpillars visit the juicy leaves of the young sunflower.
- ✦ When the sunflower blooms, honey bees, bumble bees and wild bees will visit to gather nectar.
- ✦ Sometimes butterflies and beetles will visit.
- ✦ Leaf-hoppers and other insects often spend time on the underside of the leaf, drinking the juices of the plant.
- ✦ In autumn, as the seeds ripen, many birds will visit the sunflower: goldfinches, chickadees and blue jays love to eat the nutritious seeds.
- ✦ Squirrels like sunflower seeds too ... and if they can't reach the flowers, they will pick up seeds that the birds drop on the ground.



EWIKASIK TA'N TELI KWEK KTWASUEKN

[my sunflower journal]

Ta'n skinmin kisi ika'tu'nl?

When did you plant your seeds? _____

Tami ika'taqnm etek?

Where did you plant your seeds? _____

Ta'sikl skinmin kisi ika'tu'nl?

How many seeds did you plant? _____

Draw the different kinds of seeds:

Ta'n saqalikaqipnn?

When did you see the first sprout? _____

Msit saqaliaql?

Did all of your seeds sprout? _____

Tali pitaqip ktasuekm ikaq newt enktie'wimk? (Msit nkate'n.)

How tall was your sunflower plant after a week?

(If you have many plants, you can choose one or many.)

Katu newte'jit tepunuset pamiej tal pitaq ktasu ekm?

How tall was your sunflower after one month? _____

Tapusijik tepknusetk?

After two months? _____

Ne'sijik tepknusetk?

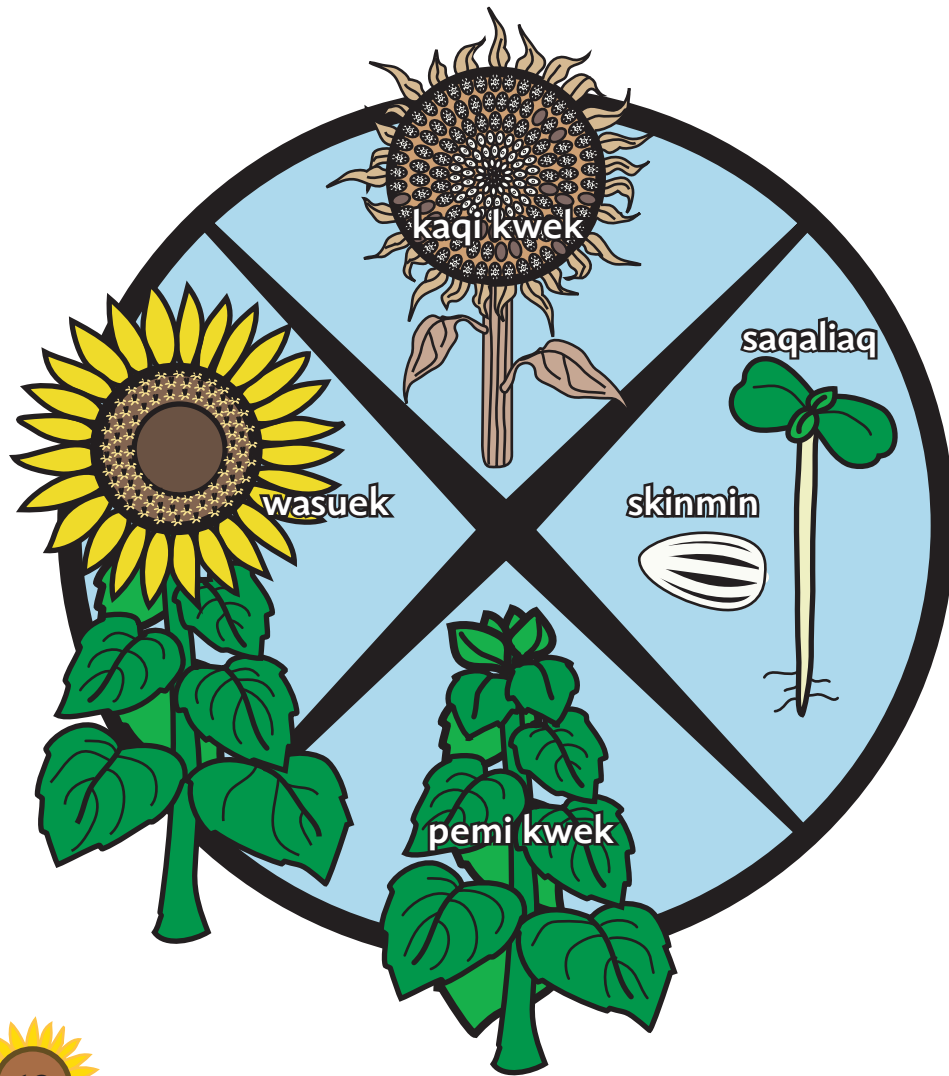
After three months? _____



TA'N TELI KWEK MESKI'K WASUEK

[my sunflower's growth]

The Medicine Wheel can help us to understand the life cycle of a sunflower.



TA'NIK KESATMI'TIJ IKA'TAQN

[sunflower visitors]



tities



atu'tuej



wapatjikej



po'ks



jaki'kes



iptoqnke'wj



temoqji'pilasit



amu



enkejit



NTASUEKML AQ W'TANM

[my sunflower and my community]

draw inside your sunflowers

Nuji
Kina'mua'tijik
[school teachers]

Jiksu'k
[family]

Ta'nik
Ajipjutu'tij
Wantaqo'ti Ten
[RCMP Officers]

Nitapk
[friends]

Toqi Kejik
[neighbours]

[me]

Ta'nik
Nusaptmi'tij
Mawi Kisitaqn
[natural resource guardians]

Nuji Npitaqtijik
[health care people]

Nuji
Toqomajo'tk
Mawi
Kisitaqn
[scientists]