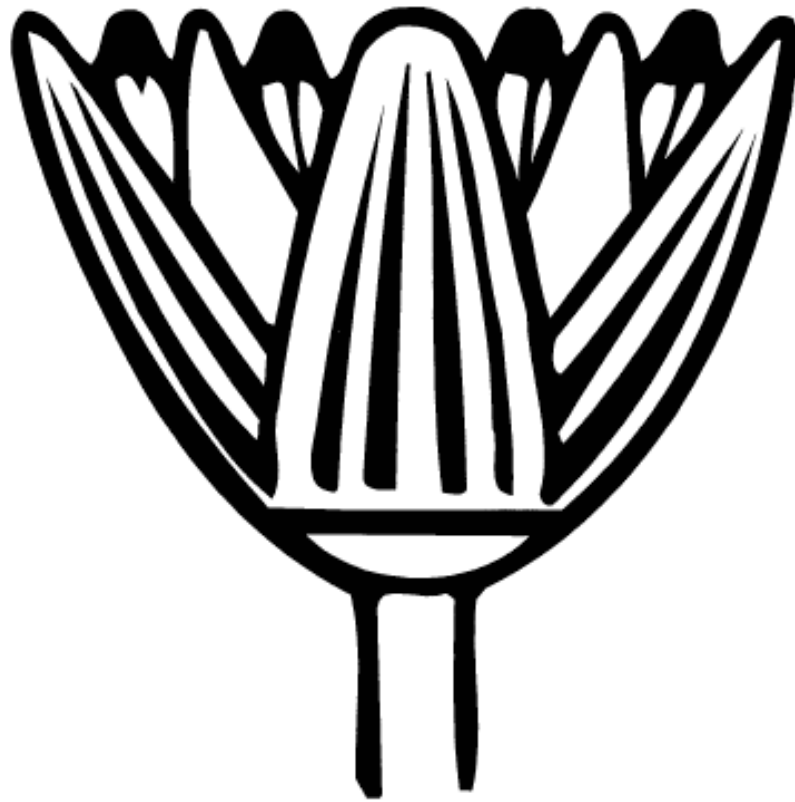


Birmingham Botanical Gardens History Pack



The Egyptians

THE BIRMINGHAM
BOTANICAL
GARDENS
TURN OVER A NEW LEAF

Activities

Useful Egyptian Plants

A number of plants growing in the glasshouses were used by the ancient Egyptians. Pupils can look for some of these plants, then describe and draw them on Sheet 1. Sheet 2 explains how writing paper was made from the papyrus plant.

The Gift of the Nile

Conditions needed to grow a range of Egyptian plants can be studied in the glasshouses. This information can then be used to make suggestions about whether the plants would have grown on the banks of the Nile, near to the Nile or in drier regions. Pupils can record their ideas on Sheet 3.

Egyptian Motifs

Many of the Egyptian plants were used as the stylised basis for repeating patterns for decoration. Pupils can see some of these designs on Sheet 4 and then use sketches of Egyptian plants to create their own designs on Sheet 5.

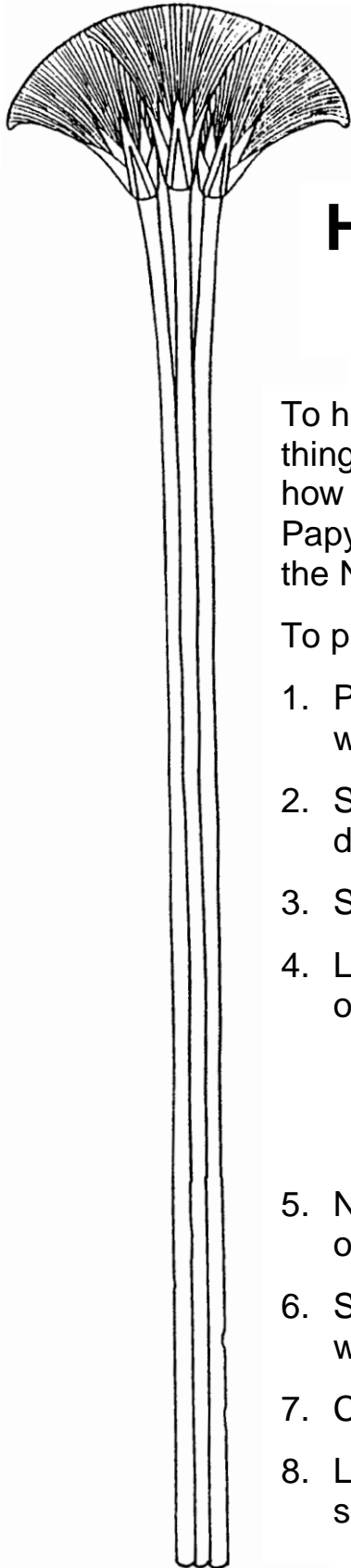
Please note: plants can change due to seasons etc., so you may not find all the plants mentioned on the worksheets on the day of your visit.

Useful Egyptian Plants

Search for these useful Egyptian plants that grow in the glasshouses at Birmingham Botanical Gardens.

Location	Plant	Use(s)
Subtropical House	Papyrus reed	Fibres for paper Used for decoration
	Date palm	Fruit Fibres for rope Leaf strips for baskets
Mediterranean House	Citrus fruits	Food Oils for medicine Perfume oils
	Locust tree (carob)	Chocolate-tasting bean
	Olive	Fruit Oil for cooking & medicine Leaves for decoration
	Fig	Fruit Leaves for decoration
Arid House	Euphorbias (succulents, <i>not</i> cacti!)	Traditional medicine

Choose one of these plants to draw and describe here:

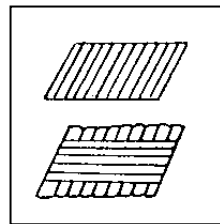


How to be a Scribe in Ancient Egypt

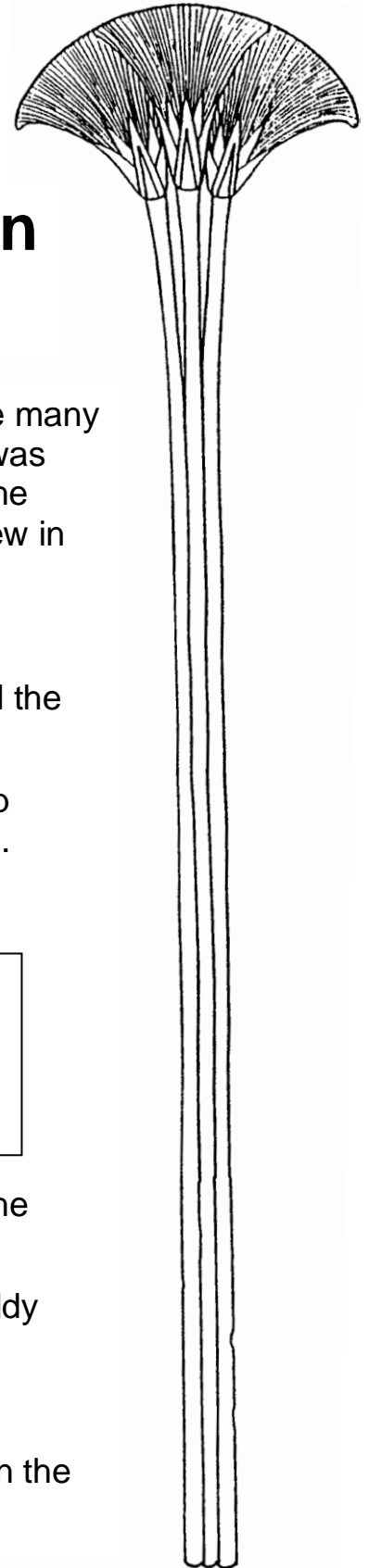
To have been a scribe in Egypt, there were many things you needed to know. One of these was how to make paper. This was made from the Papyrus plant, a tall reed-like plant that grew in the Nile delta.

To prepare the paper you had to:

1. Peel away the outer rind leaving behind the white pith.
2. Slice it into thin strips (the length of strip depends on the width of paper needed).
3. Soak the strips in water.
4. Lay the strips out like this:
on a flat surface.



5. Now place another layer on top but in the opposite direction.
6. Stick the two layers together using muddy water from the Nile.
7. Cover with a heavy stone.
8. Leave for several days and then hang in the sun to dry.



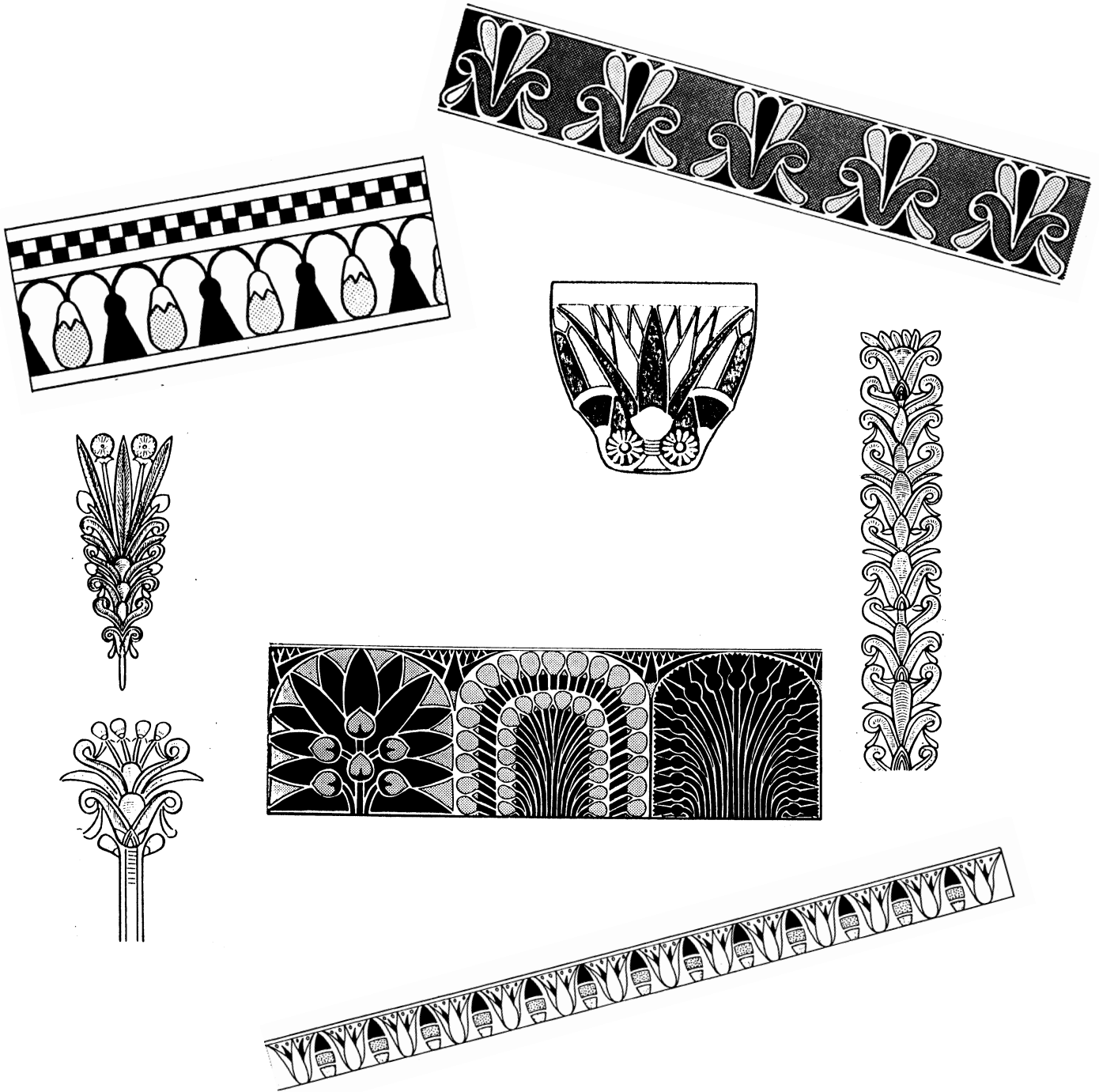
Gift of the Nile

Find each of these Egyptian plants and read the information label. Decide where in Egypt this plant might grow: banks of the Nile, close to the Nile or drier places away from the Nile.

<p><u>Papyrus reed (Subtropical House)</u></p> <p>Climate:</p> <p>Special features:</p> <p>Places it would grow in Egypt:</p>	<p><u>Date palm (Subtropical House)</u></p> <p>Climate:</p> <p>Special features:</p> <p>Places it would grow in Egypt:</p>
<p><u>Olive (Mediterranean House)</u></p> <p>Climate:</p> <p>Special features:</p> <p>Places it would grow in Egypt:</p>	<p><u>Euphorbia (Arid House)</u></p> <p>Climate:</p> <p>Special features:</p> <p>Places it would grow in Egypt:</p>

Egyptian Motifs

Can you see how Egyptian plants inspired these designs?



Have a go at designing your own Egyptian decorations on the next page.

Design your own Egyptian decorations here, based on plant forms.
