



Subtropical Glasshouse

The display pod is designed to act as a stimulus for discussion about some of the plants to be found in this climate zone with **hot, humid summers** and **chilly to mild winters**. These are some background notes to the plants used in the pod, which may help teachers and group leaders in their interpretation of this glasshouse to their pupils.



Tea

Camellia sinensis



The leaves and leaf buds of this plant are used to produce tea. White, green, oolong and black tea are all produced from this plant but are processed differently to achieve different tastes. Fresh leaves contain about 4% caffeine and different leaf ages produce different tea qualities. Usually the tip (bud) and the first two to three leaves are harvested for processing; the hand picking is repeated every one to two weeks.



Cotton Buds

Gossypium hirsutum



Flower buds called 'squares' appear on this plant before the blossom opens after about 3 weeks. The petals change from creamy white to yellow, then pink and finally red. After 3 days they fall off and leave green pods called 'bolls'. Inside these pods, there are soft fibres that grow around the seeds and it is these fibres that are spun into yarn or thread to be used to make clothing.

Key to symbols





Silk flower
Orchidaceae



The number of orchid species in the world equals about four times the number of mammal and bird species together! Some grow in the ground but many live on trees or rocks. Orchids are often cultivated for the enjoyment of their flowers and are often given as gifts.



Senna
Cassia angustifolia



This plant is native to India and is cultivated mainly in India and Pakistan. It is the leaves and seed pods of the plant that are used, as a treatment for constipation. It has been used as a natural laxative for centuries, being considered as a cleansing herb.



Clarinet
Arundo donax



The Giant Reed is a tall perennial plant that grows in fresh and moderately saline waters. It grows to around 6m, generally growing about 5cm a day in spring. Used to make paper, fishing rods and walking sticks, it is also used as a reed for woodwind instruments such as the oboe, bassoon, saxophone and clarinet.