

# Playful springboards: POPPY

## How are poppy seeds harvested?

After the flower petals have fallen off, the seeds dry in the poppy seed capsules and poppy fields are filled with a many-voiced, fine but clearly audible rattling sound at the slightest breeze: as if the poppy itself wanted to draw attention to its imminent harvest.

Carefully shake the seeds out by hand.

## Growing poppies

The poppy is a summer plant and a wildflower, and it's easy to grow. Choose a sunny spot for poppies, and they will thrive – they can even survive three or four weeks without water.

A few weeks before sowing poppy seeds, enrich the soil with compost. The soil needs to be free draining, so dig over the area prior to sowing the seeds.

## Recipes

The seeds of the poppy flower are edible and can be found in the baking or spices aisles of shops. Poppy seeds are commonly used to flavour food, providing texture and a nutty flavour. They are often seen in cakes and breadmaking.



Poppy seed recipes

### Austrian poppy seed delicacies

Poppy seeds (*Mohn* in German) are a common ingredient in many Austrian dishes. Search online for recipes such as: Mohnzelten, Mohnnudeln, Mohnkuchen, Mohnstrudel, Mohn-torte, Mohn-Topfen-Kuchen and Mohn-Muffins.

Use a translation app and start cooking!

## Practical uses

Poppy flowers have been used as painkillers for soothing mild aches and pains like toothache and a sore throat.

A tea infusion made from the dried petals helps ease sore a throat or cough.

Fresh poppy petals have been used in preparing a syrup for use in red dyes, lipstick, to make the colour of the wine more vivid, and for reducing facial wrinkles.

Scientists are now beginning to think that chemicals within the petals may prevent skin cancer.





## Facts and Folklore

### Austria's Poppy Village

In the Waldviertel, a region in Lower Austria, poppies are cultivated and presented in all their facets including a poppy nature trail, which in addition to cultivation, harvesting and use also conveys historical facts and the poppy garden, in which a wide variety of poppy varieties bloom. Beyond the village and into the fields is a poppy hiking trail - follow the red poppy symbol!



Waldviertel



Mohndorf Austria

If you want to use parts or all of the poppy gently remove the whole flower from the stem using secateurs or scissors, then carefully pull off the petals, sepals or seed head.



### Poppy percussion

The poppy seed head is the fruit of the poppy. Allow the seed heads to dry out for 1-2 weeks, then shake each one in turn.

The sound is the seeds rattling inside. Compare the sounds from each dried poppy head, and use them to create percussion music.



### Hungarian Poppies

In Hungary there are great poppy-fields all over the country and it grows near the houses as well in suburban gardens. However, though it looks beautiful, farmers consider it to be a weed among the grains.

The poppy is commonly depicted in Hungarian folk art.



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## Remembrance



Dried poppy petals can be used to decorate the tops of cakes or added to art and craft projects such as candles, soaps and bath bombs.

Poppies provide great inspiration for photography, poetry and drawing projects - be adventurous and have some fun thinking up ways to create inspired by poppies.

The poppy is an international symbol of remembrance of the human loss on the battlefields of WW1 in Northern Europe. The battle-scarred land provided perfect conditions for the awakening of the poppy seeds, which thrive on disturbed ground. Poppies in full bloom then conjured an impression of an overwhelming 'sea of blood' evoking sorrow as well as hope.

With the theme of remembrance and with its beauty, the poppy is an ideal plant to inspire creativity and art projects in young people.



## Hapa Zome

is the art of creating prints using the natural dyes released when a plant is 'bashed'.

Plants with a high-water content and strong colours work best, as they will leach into the medium being used. Stems and petals work equally well. Each young person finds their own leaves and/or petals and is provided with a piece of cotton approx. size 20cm x 10cm (cut from old pale coloured sheets for example).

Trap the plant parts on one side of the piece of folded cloth, fold the other half over on top of the leaves/petals.

Pound the cloth with a mallet or piece of wood.

Gently lift to examine the print being made.

When the fabric is finally unfolded, a virtually symmetrical imprint of the plant part is left behind on both halves of the folded cloth.

## Arts and Crafts

Create a poppy remembrance lantern by making poppies and gluing them to the outside of a jam jar illuminated with a tealight candle.

Make poppies from a multitude of media such as felt, tissue paper, card, paper, coffee filter papers or even from painted, cut up egg boxes.

Collect several small leaves (which usually fall from the stem) and dry them between books or in a flower press for a couple of weeks. Use the dried leaves to create a flower or abstract pattern for pictures, greetings cards and gift labels.