

TYPES OF FLOWERS

Flowers come in many shapes, sizes, and colors. Not all of them have all of the structures mentioned previously.

Plants may produce flowers that are perfect or imperfect. A flower with male and female parts is called a **perfect flower**. A flower that is missing male or female parts is an **imperfect flower**.

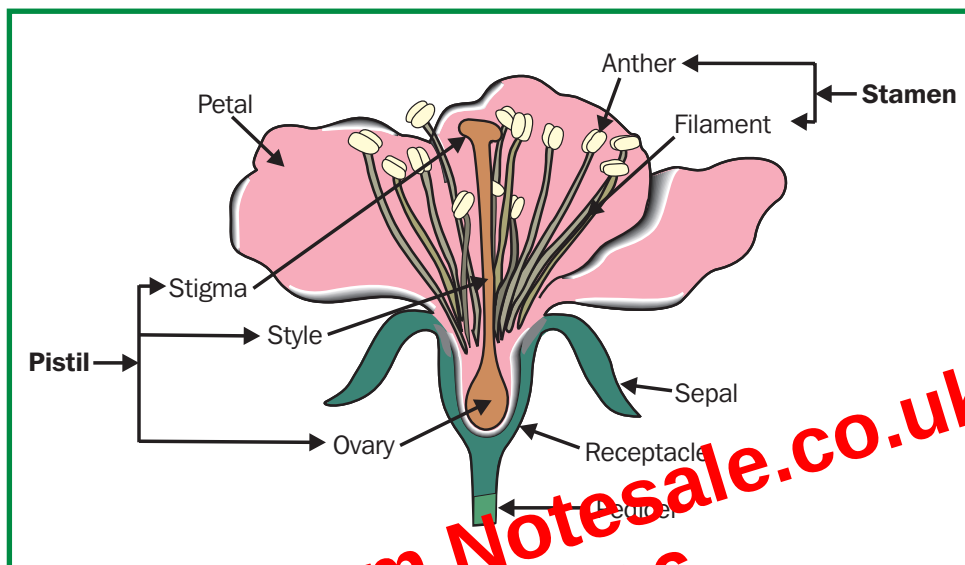


FIGURE 1. Parts of a perfect flower.

Plants may have flowers that are complete or incomplete. If a flower has sepals, petals, pistils, and stamens, it is a **complete flower**. If a flower is missing one of those, it is an **incomplete flower**. Imperfect flowers are always incomplete, but incomplete flowers may or may not be imperfect.

Plants may be classified as monoecious or dioecious. **Monoecious** plants have male and female flowers on one plant. Corn, cucumbers, and oaks are monoecious. **Dioecious** plants have male and female flowers on separate plants. Soybeans, asparagus, kiwi, and hemp are examples of dioecious plants.

A good way to tell the difference between a monocot and a dicot is to look closely at the flowers. Monocots have flowers with flower parts in multiples of three, and dicots have flowers with flower parts in multiples of four or five.

TYPES OF INFLORESCENCES

Flowers are borne on plant stems in one of two ways. Some plants have solitary flowers, such as the tulip, narcissus, and rose. Other plants have flower clusters, known as an **inflorescence**, which is the stem's branching system. The main stem of an inflorescence is known as the **peduncle**. Pedicels that branch from the peduncle support individual flowers.