

Celery and Food Coloring Experiment

Do you like to water the plants in your home or garden? We already know that plants and flowers need water to grow and live, but what happens after that? Find out what really occurs when you sprinkle that water with this fun celery science experiment that uses food coloring to show how plants absorb water!

What You Need:

- Tall, clear glass or jar
- Water
- Red food coloring
- Scissors
- Celery stalk with leaves
- Printable Observation Sheet



What You Do:

1. Fill a tall, clear glass or jar half-full with water.
2. Add a few drops of red food coloring and mix well.
3. Trim the bottom of a large stalk of celery, leaving the leaves on the stalk.
4. Place the celery stalk in the glass or jar. Leave overnight in order for the stalk to “drink” the water.
5. Print out the observation sheet for this activity. Have your child draw a picture of the celery stalk “before” it drinks the red water and then have him write a sentence to describe what he sees.
6. The next morning, observe what has happened. Let your child tell you where he thinks the water has gone and what has happened to the celery. If he's stumped, explain that water has been absorbed into the celery stalk, tinting the stem and leaves red. Ask him if he thinks the whole plant gets water for food, and help guide him to see that yes, the whole plant did get the water for food since all parts of the plant have now turned red (from absorbing the red water that was in the cup the day before).
7. Have your child complete the “after” portion of the observation sheet. He can draw a picture of what happened and write a sentence to sum up his findings.

Now that you have seen how plants absorb water, try this experiment in a new and different way!

- Take a celery stalk with leaves and trim the bottom.
- Using the scissors, make a slit up the middle of the stalk stopping an inch below the leaves.
- Fill two glasses half-full with water. Add a few drops of food coloring to one glass and add a few drops of a different color food coloring into the second glass.
- Mix the food coloring in each glass and place the glasses next to each other. Put one-half of the celery stalk in one glass and the other half in the other glass. Leave overnight.
- The next morning, observe what has happened. What changes do you notice about the celery and the water? What's different about this experiment compared to the first one? Each half of the celery stalk will have absorbed the colored water and the two colors will have blended together as they moved up inside the stalk!