

## Parasitic Plants

Learn about the xylem vessels in plants and observe the movement of water through them. Find out about parasitic plants, such as mistletoe, yellow rattle and eyebright, which invade the vasculature of host plants, drawing out their essential water and nutrients.

**Practical ideas:** Children could observe the movement of water through xylem by putting sticks of celery in water that has food colouring in it. After a few days, slice the celery to reveal the staining around the vessels. Alternatively, coat the bottom of the stem of a cut flower with Vaseline and place it in a vase with an uncoated cut flower. Observe changes that occur in both flowers and make comparisons between them. Parasitic plants have a specialised organ called a haustorium, which allows them to connect with the vessels of the host.

### Practical resources:

- Sticks of celery
- Cut flowers
- Vases
- Water
- Food colouring
- Knife
- Petroleum jelly

