

Year 4 Home Learning

Friday 26th June 2026

- Pick one of the three options to complete.
- Option 1 – Roman Plant Detective
- Option 2 – Design a Roman Coin
- Option 3 – Roman Writing Tablet

Roman Plants and Medicine

Most medicines until recently, were made from plants or other natural substances as that was all that was commonly available.

How did Romans use plants as medicine?

In the Roman period, many writers tried to make records of how plants could be used to help people stay healthy and to treat illnesses. The most famous of these ancient authors were Roman writer Pliny the Elder and the Greek doctor Pedanius Dioscorides.

Dioscorides:

Dioscorides was a doctor in Greece during the first century. He collected information about plants from all around the Roman Empire. Including, where the plants liked to grow, how they could be used and what they looked like. He spent his whole life writing an enormous medical encyclopaedia. This book contained hand drawn pictures of all the plants that he described and was used by doctors right up until the 1900s!

Did you know

Dioscorides' work led to many plants being deliberately spread around the Roman Empire so that they could be used for eating or in medicines. The Romans were responsible for introducing garlic, onions, carrots, parsley, rosemary, walnuts and stinging nettles to Britain.



Become a plant detective

Many of the plants that Dioscorides described in his book are still used today as either garden plants or as herbs for cooking. Try out the Plant Detective Challenge and see if you can spot some of the plants!

Why not think about starting your very own historical herb garden. Many of these plants are very good for the natural environment as they encourage insects such as bee's to visit them. So you can help the planet by introducing new plants into your garden.



It is really important that you don't try to make your own medicines out of the plants you find or grow. If used in the wrong way many plants can make you poorly - even the Roman doctors got it wrong sometimes!

Only go outside if safe to do so. You could also try and find these things in a lovely airconditioned supermarket!

Plant Detective Challenge

See what plants you can find growing in your garden or local area you might even find some of these dried in the herb cupboard in your kitchen! Tick off as many as you can!



Lavender

Useful for many purposes, but most commonly for scenting bath water – its name actually comes from the word ‘to wash’ in Latin - lave



Mint

For treating coughs and colds as well as an ‘antiseptic’ for wounds. It's strongly smelling leaves were also spread on the floors of houses as an ‘air freshener’.



Garlic

Was thought to keep the body strong and to protect it from infection. It was used by early athletes in the Olympics to give them energy and hopefully to make them win their races.



Sage

Used as a general ‘tonic’ to protect health; it was also thought to bring wisdom, hence its name which today means ‘a person of wisdom’.



Marigold

Was used to help cuts and grazes heal. It was also an antiseptic. Marigolds are still used in some skin creams today.



Oregano

Used as an antiseptic as well as to treat stomach upsets.



Rosemary

Was often used to treat coughs and colds.

Plant Detective Challenge

See what plants you can find growing in your garden or local area you might even find some of these dried in the herb cupboard in your kitchen! Tick off as many as you can!

☐ Fennel

Used to treat stomach cramps. Roman soldiers also chewed it to stop them feeling hungry on long marches. Dried fennel stems would have been used to start fires.



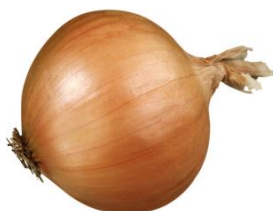
☐ Comfrey

Was used as a poultice to treat injuries such as bruises and sprains. In many parts of England the plant is still called 'Knit-bone'.



☐ Onion

Were often hung up in the home as a garland to keep the family free from infections. Rubbing fresh onions on your skin was thought to warm the body up and to give you extra strength and energy.



☐ Poppy

Certain types of poppy were used to make strong pain-relieving medicines. Romans used these to allow them to do surgery on patients and to treat battle injuries.



☐ Bay Leaves

Were thought to help you sleep well.



☐ Marshmallow

Was used for making cough medicine.



Roman Coins

Use this template to design your very own Roman coin.

Roman coins were not just for buying things, they gave you lots of information. They showed people what the emperor looked like, celebrated important victories, and showed off the latest hairstyles!

Name

Your name is important!



Title

This could be *Imperator* meaning Emperor.

SPQR

This stood for the *Senate and People of Rome*



Ancestral Name

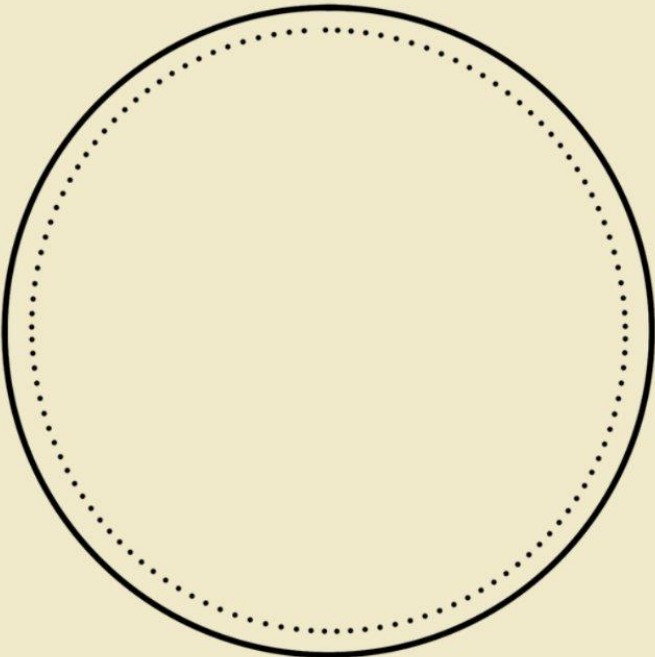
This linked to a powerful emperor so everyone knew you had a right to rule.

Portrait

You wanted people to know what you looked like!

Symbolic Image

This represented one of your achievements, such as an important victory.



What would you put on your coin if you were a Roman Emperor? Use this template to draw your design.



Silver *denarius* of minted in

Writing Tablet Mystery

The archaeologists at Vindolanda have found this mysterious ink writing tablet, covered in scrawled words. As the leading expert in Roman Cursive script they need you to help them solve the mystery of what this tablet says, it may hold important clues to the past. Can you help?



Use the alphabet translator to discovery what this tablet says and then write it out on the blank tablet to send back to the archaeologists.

ALPHABET TRANSLATOR

Handwritten Roman Cursive letters A through G are shown above their corresponding modern alphabet letters.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Handwritten Roman Cursive letters H through O are shown above their corresponding modern alphabet letters.

H	I	K	L	M	N	O
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Handwritten Roman Cursive letters P through X are shown above their corresponding modern alphabet letters.

P	Q	R	S	T	U	X
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

The Roman alphabet was slightly different to ours and some letters like j, w, y and z were missing, you might have to use the closest letter you can find. For example instead of a 'J' you would use an 'I'.

Writing Tablet Mystery

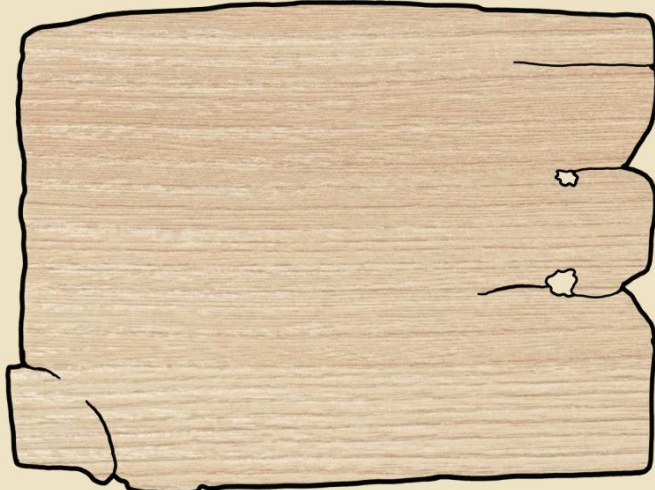
The mysterious ink writing tablet would have been written almost 2000 years ago. Using a wooden pen with an iron nib which you would have dipped into the ink and used to write the message.

NIGER AND ZOCCHUS TO THIN
CFR1215. UP NEXT BROTHER THAT
WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT
TO DO WILL BE MOST
SUCCESSFUL. YOU ARE MOST
WORTHY TO PERFORM
THIS TASK.

Good Luck ON YOUR
MISSION.
FARFELL BROTHER
TO FLAVIUS CFR1215
PROFECT OF THE NINTH
COHORT OF EXTRANGS



Write your translation below.



Use the Roman Alphabet to write your own secret messages or have a go at writing your name. Are all the letters you need there or do you need to adjust some?