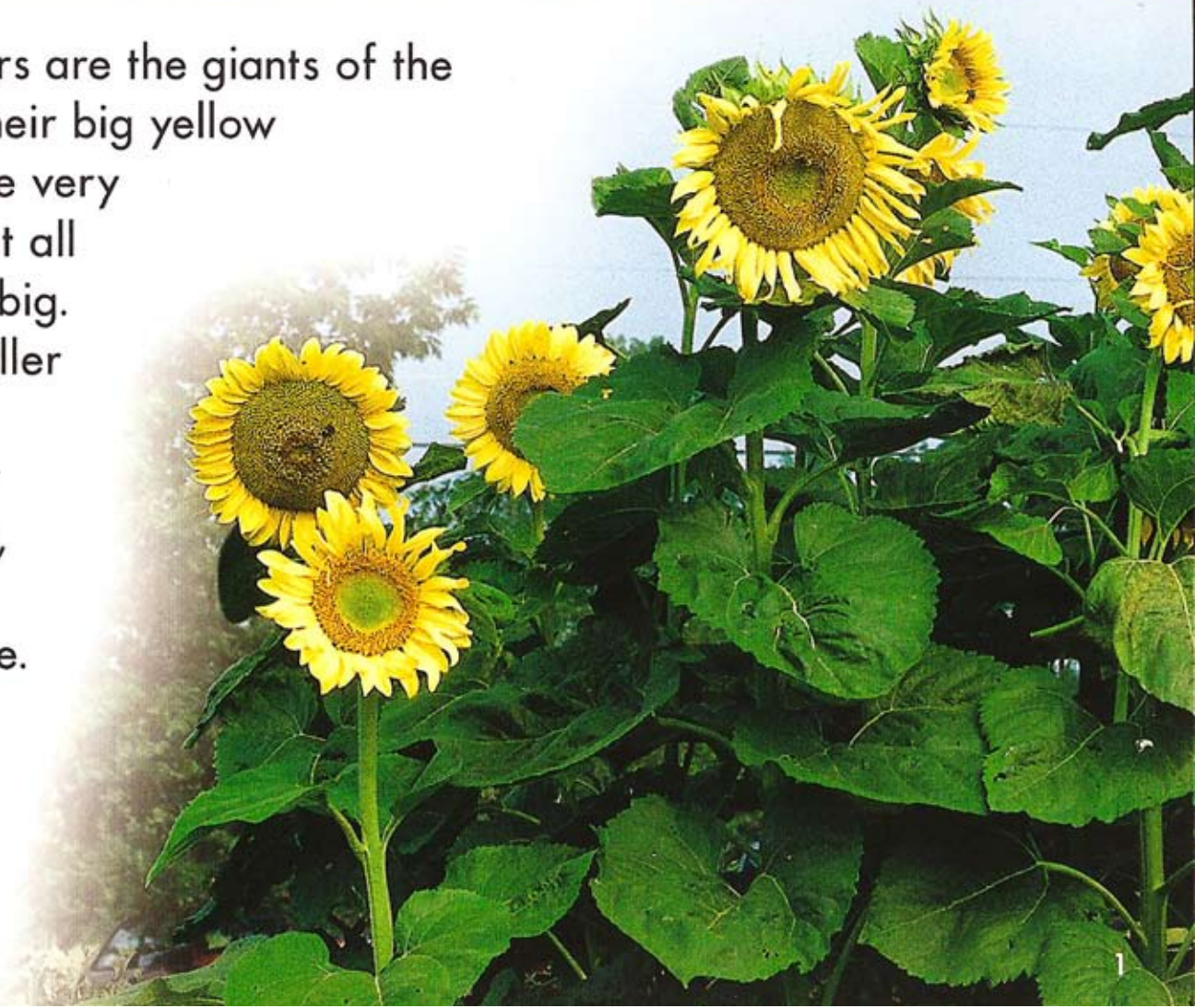


These sunflowers are the giants of the garden. With their big yellow flowers they are very well named! Not all sunflowers are big. Some are no taller than your knee. But many tower over your head, standing eight feet tall or more.



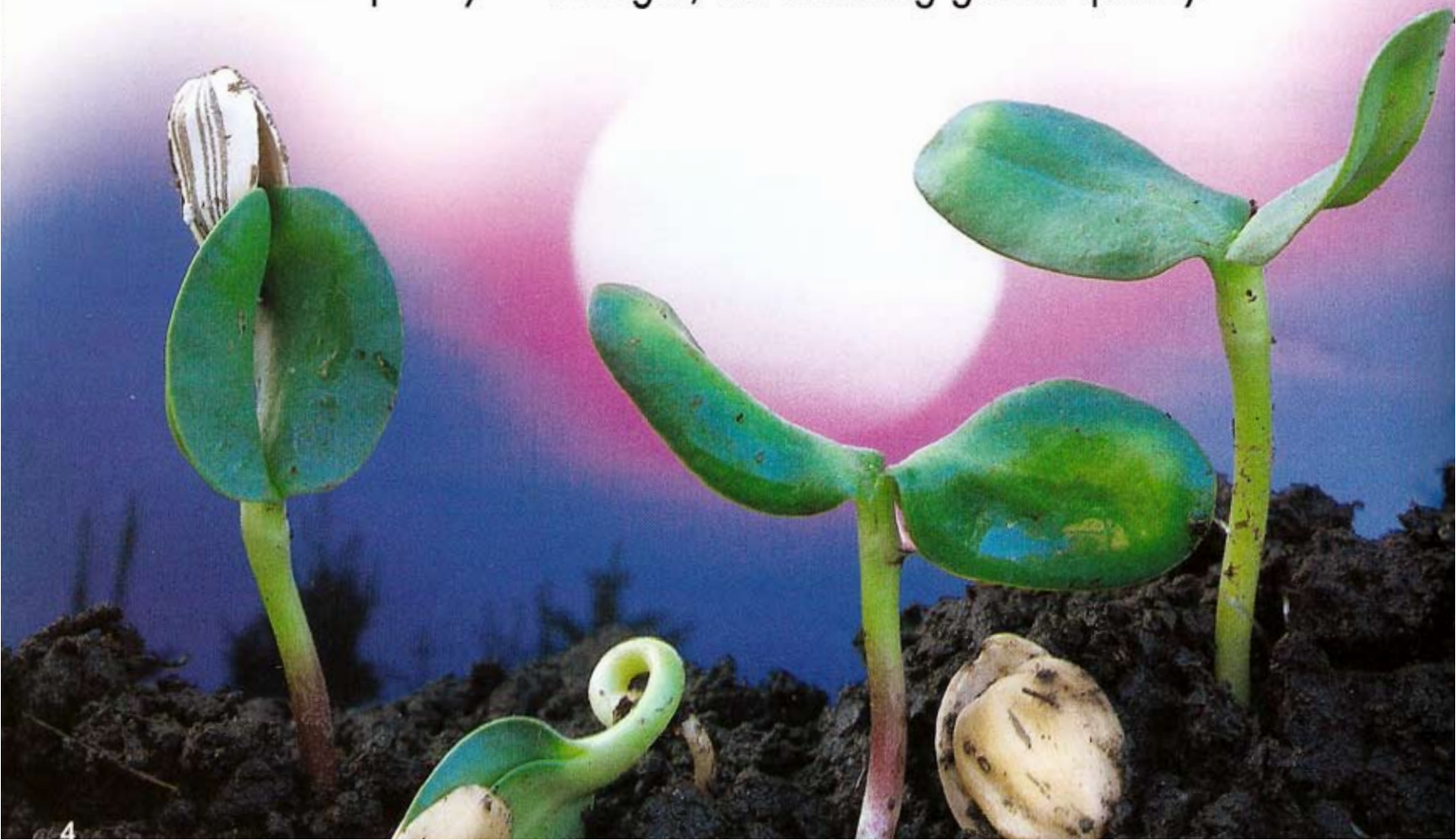


A giant sunflower begins with a small seed. The seed's shell, or seed coat, is striped. When water enters the seed, it swells and cracks open. A small root pushes out and grows down into the ground.

Next, a small stem grows up toward the sun. The first two leaves, called seed leaves, push up the seed coat. The seed leaves wear the seed coat like a hat!



With plenty of sunlight, the seedling grows quickly.



New leaves appear. The leaves are like food factories for the sunflower plant. The leaves make sugar, using sunlight, water, and a gas in the air called carbon dioxide.



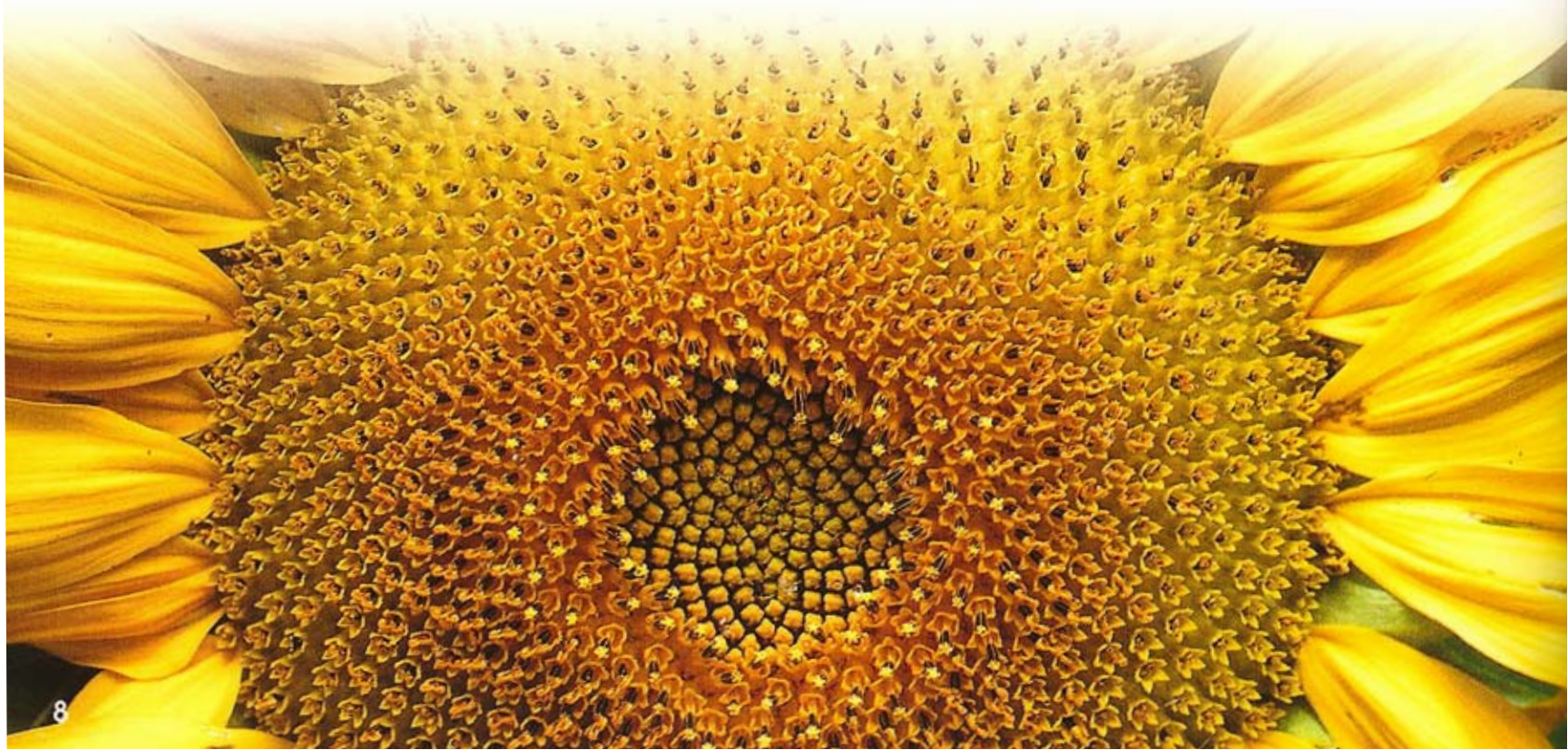
At the top of the sunflower stalk, a flower head forms and opens. It looks like one giant flower, but it is really many little flowers clustered together. The little flowers are called florets.

There are two kinds of florets. About 2,000 dark florets are packed in the center of the flower head. Around them are about 100 florets with bright yellow petals.





When the flower head first opens, the dark florets are inside little buds. Then the buds open. Nectar in the florets attracts bees and other insects.



The bright yellow petals around the flower head also help the bees find the sunflower. The bees move from floret to floret, feeding on nectar. On the way, they carry powdery pollen from one part of the flower head to another.



When pollen lands on a floret, a seed begins to form. Soon the flower head has many new seeds and many wilting florets.



You can pluck a seed from the flower head to see what it looks like.
It may still have a floret attached.



The seeds grow larger and turn darker. By fall, the flower head is so heavy that it droops from the weight of its seeds.



Birds, squirrels, and other animals may find and eat the tasty seeds. If you're lucky, maybe you'll get there first! Sometimes the sunflower seeds are not eaten, and they fall to the ground.

When the soil warms up and the spring rains fall, the seeds will begin to grow. The sunflower life cycle will begin again.



Can you put these in order?





Answer



CHOOSE FROM 12 TITLES IN THIS LIFE CYCLES SERIES!

CTP 3059 Monarch Butterfly

CTP 3060 Bean

CTP 3061 Sunflower

CTP 3062 Wood Frog

CTP 3063 Ladybug

CTP 3064 Chicken

CTP 3065 Jumping Spider

CTP 3066 Maple Tree

CTP 3067 Green Snake

CTP 3068 Hummingbird

CTP 3069 Horse

CTP 3070 Fighting Fish