

# Discover Art

## WITH NEWFIELDS

### → ABOUT THE ARTIST

#### William Forsyth

○ William Forsyth was an impressionist painter who was part of the Hoosier Group of Indiana artists.

○ The Hoosier Group was comprised of five artists who studied together and are

known for painting Indiana landscape scenes.

○ Forsyth was a teacher at the Herron School of Art in Indianapolis for almost 30 years.

### → CHALLENGE YOURSELF

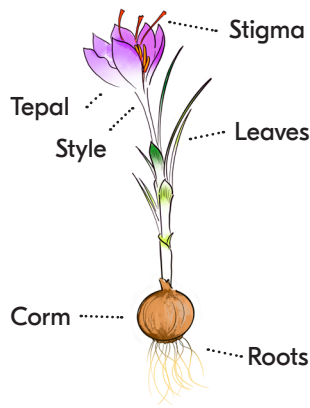
#### Learn more about crocuses

Crocuses are one of the first flowers to bloom in spring and are a symbol of youthfulness and cheerfulness.

Humans started cultivating crocuses in 500 years B.C.E. (or 2500 years ago).

Crocuses can be pollinated by a variety of insects including bees, moths, and beetles.

Saffron spice (used in cooking) is derived from dried stigmas of the **saffron crocus** (*crocus sativus*). Saffron is the most expensive spice by weight in the world. Saffron based pigment was used in cave paintings 50,000 years ago.



#### Basic parts of the crocus:

Crocuses grow from a corm, which is like a bulb, except it is solid with no layers whereas bulbs are a series of layers like an onion.

**Style** — this is the stem

**Tepal** — there are six petals on each flower, called **tepal**

**Stigma** — crocuses have three of these, which capture pollen —this is what is harvested for saffron from the saffron crocus

## Up Close with Nature



Above: William J. Forsyth (American, 1854-1935), *Crocuses*, date unknown, oil on canvas, 18 x 24 in., Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields, Bequest of Allen Whitehill Clowes, 2001.353

### → SHARE IDEAS

View a larger version of this painting on page 2. Make binoculars with your hands to scan the image for details. What do you see?

○ What time of year is portrayed?

○ Do you think this is a warm or cool day?

○ What kinds of brushstrokes did the artist use? Are they small and precise, or larger and full of texture?

○ What are some of the colors that the artist used? Are any of them surprising?

### → BE CREATIVE

Crocuses open their petals as temperatures rise and close them when it gets colder, sometimes repeating the action several times during the day. Movement of flowers in response to temperature change is known as **thermonasty**. This movement protects the pollen from snow and rain, covering it until warmer weather brings out pollinators.

How would a crocus flower respond to these weather conditions? Pretend you are a crocus flower and your arms are the petals.

- Warm sunshine
- Cloudy with a cold breeze
- Hot with bees in search of pollen
- Spring storm with wind and rain





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