

Plants

Some plants are carnivorous, such as the Venus Fly Trap. These types of plants tend to live in poor soil so need additional nutrients from insects.



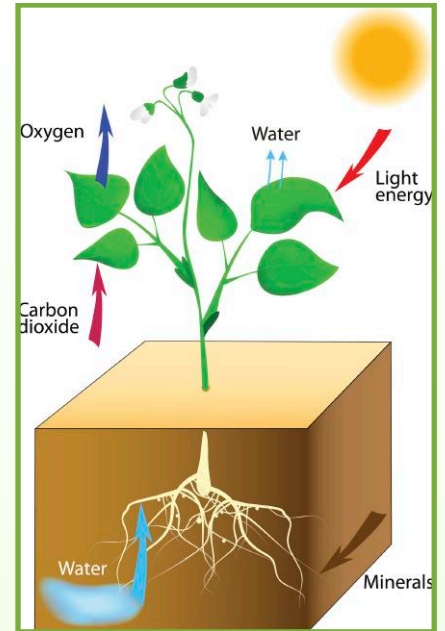
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The fastest growing plant in the world is bamboo. Some species can grow 91cm (35in) in a day! In tropical zones they can reach 40 metres (130 feet) tall!



Plants

A reaction takes place inside the leaves of a plant, converting light from the sun, carbon dioxide in the air and water into nutrients for the plant and oxygen. This is known as photosynthesis.



Plants

Nobody knows exactly how many different plant species there are in the world, but scientists estimate that there are nearly 400,000 different species!



Plants

In order to survive, most plants need five essential things - air, light, warmth, water and nutrients.



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The largest flower in the world is the *Rafflesia arnoldii*, which only grows in Indonesian rainforests. It can grow to nearly a metre (3ft) across and weigh up to 6.8kg (15 pounds). It gives off a horrible stench to attract insects!



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Strawberries, peaches, plums and apples are all members of the same family as roses: Rosaceae.



Plants

Seeds in a sunflower are arranged in two spirals, following the Fibonacci sequence. Normally there are 34 spirals in one direction and 55 spirals in the other.



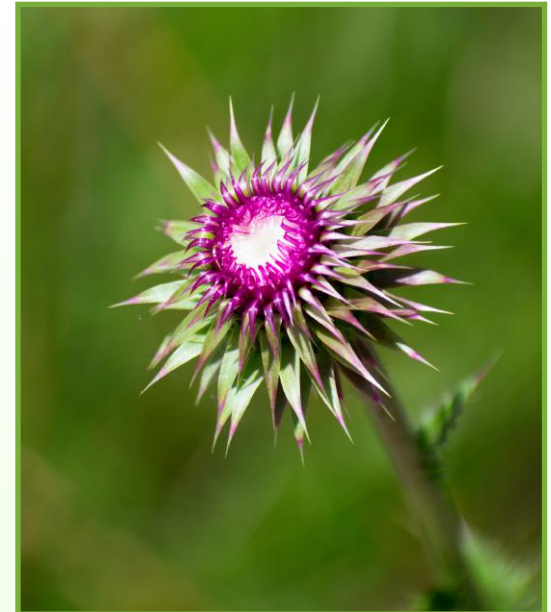
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The oldest known tree in the world is a Great Basin bristlecone pine in the White Mountains of California, USA. It is over 5000 years old!



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Plants can defend themselves in many ways, including thorns, spines, hairs, taste and poison! This helps to stop them being eaten by animals.



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Peanuts, despite their name, are not actually nuts but seeds. They belong to the same family as beans and peas.



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Bonsai is the Japanese art of growing small trees in pots. The trees are kept small by careful cutting and pruning. They can live for hundreds of years.



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Plants will grow towards sunlight, even growing upside down if necessary. This is known as phototropism.



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Herbs and spices are very important in cooking. A herb is the leaf of a plant and a spice is from any other part of the plant, such as the seed, stem, bark or root.



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The smallest flowering plant in the world is the watermeal (*Wolffia globosa*). It lives in freshwater and each plant is about the size of a grain of rice.



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Many plants rely on animals to help them reproduce. Sticky pollen is transferred to another plant, for example by a bee or a bird.



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A team of Russian scientists grew a flowering plant from seeds that had been buried by a squirrel 32,000 years ago! They were buried 38 metres (124 feet) down in the permafrost.



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Plants that live in desert areas have adapted to the dry conditions. The mesquite tree, for example, has roots that can reach up to 50 metres (160 feet) to search out water in the ground.



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Many dyes can be made from plants, including woad, a blue dye used since Neolithic times.



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Fruit and vegetables have a high water content. For example, cucumbers are about 96% water, carrots about 87% water and a banana is about 74% water.



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