



The Yippittee!

for kids who are crazy about conservation!

Issue 6 February 2011

Plant Life!

Everyone loves a fluffy animal don't they?! But what about us plants! We often get forgotten about. Okay, so we don't run around or do tricks and we're not very cuddly, although I have seen people hugging trees before now. But what

people don't always realise is that without plants, animals simply would not be here either, in fact nothing much would be here at all. After all, where do animals make their homes? Often in trees

and bushes; mmm, and what do they eat?

Plants! Even those that eat other animals are eating things that eat plants. Plus you all breathe air don't you! So where do you think the oxygen comes from?

There's something quite amazing about putting a seed into the ground and watching it shoot up day by day. In fact plants are ABSOLUTELY FASCINATING! Some are GIGANTIC, some are tiny and delicate, some are ferocious trapping insects in their jaws. Perhaps after reading this you'll feel inspired to grow some plants of your own! It's great fun and really rewarding, especially if you get to eat them!



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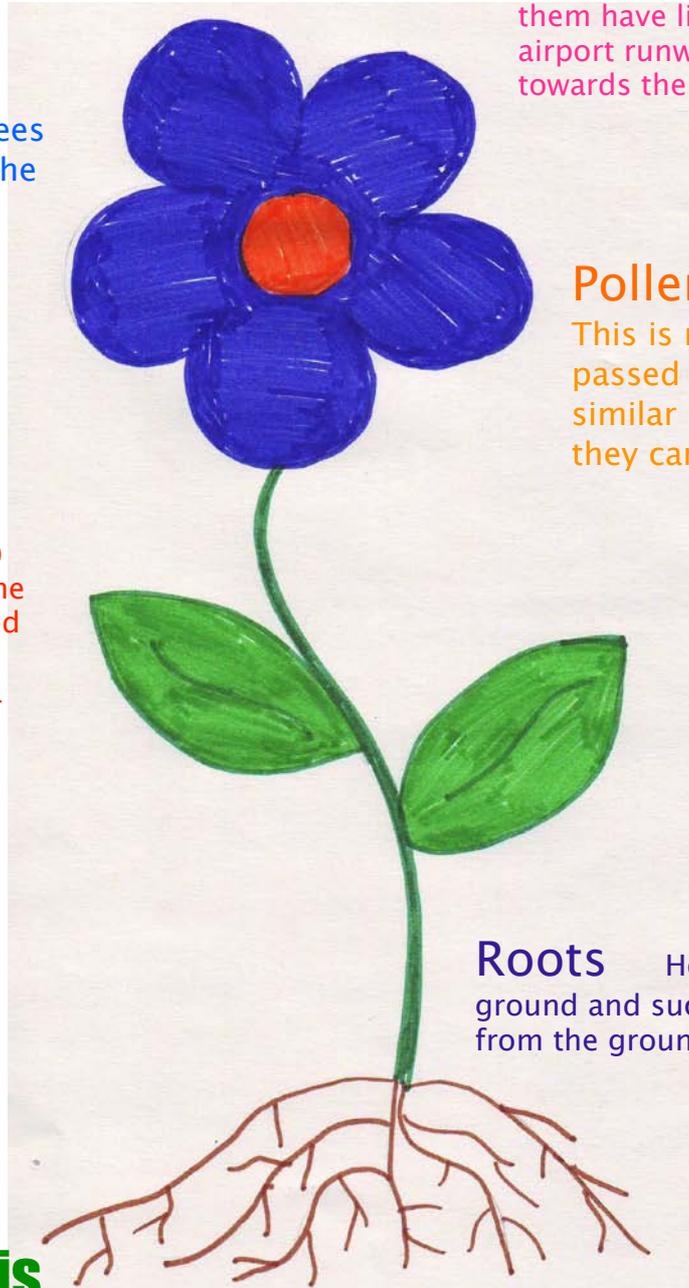
What's it for?

Nectar

This is the stuff that helps to attract the bees and other insects to the plant.

Stem

Supports the flower and carries water from the roots and sugar (glucose) from the leaves around the plant to where it is needed – similar to the blood vessels in our bodies. If a plant is thirsty then the stem becomes weak and the plant will wilt.



Petals attract insects. Some of them have lines on them like an airport runway to guide the insects towards the centre of the flower.

Pollen

This is needed to be passed on to other similar plants so that they can make seeds.

Leaves

Catch sunlight and help the plant to make food.

Roots

Hold the plant in the ground and suck up water and minerals from the ground.

Photosynthesis.

“Photo” in this word is a bit like “photo” in the word photograph. Its to do with catching hold of **light** and using it. This is what the leaves of a plant do so that they can make food. Its the **chlorophyll** in the leaves (the stuff that makes them green) that does this important job. The sunlight is used to help change a gas called **carbon dioxide** (which plants breathe in) and **water** into **glucose** which gives them energy. This is the “**synthesis**” part. All plants containing chlorophyll do this, whether they are trees, seaweeds or cacti. Plants also stay healthy by absorbing **minerals** from the air, soil and water.

Did you know...?

Many brown seaweeds or “wracks” as they are called have air bubbles on their fronds (leaves) so that they can float upwards and absorb as much sunlight as possible, for photosynthesis.

Pollination

You may have seen bees flying around with a yellow dust on them. This is pollen which sticks to their hairy bodies when they land on flowers. As they move from flower to flower, the pollen from one flower brushes off onto another. This is called "pollination".



The seeds of plants are often found inside of the fruit, so we wouldn't have any fruits either if it weren't for pollination. Sometimes other insects do this job as well but it's mainly down to the busy bees! Not all plants are pollinated by insects though, some rely on the wind to blow the pollen from one plant to another such as with alder trees where the pollen is blown from the catkins to the cones which then go on to produce seeds.

Plants need to share pollen with each other so that they can make seeds. Imagine, without seeds how would new plants grow? So bees do an extremely important job.

Did you know...?
Did you know cacti are often pollinated by bats!

Did you know...?
Some plants are only pollinated by a particular type of bee or moth. If that insect becomes rare then the future of the plant becomes threatened too.

Seed Dispersal

Plants all have special ways of spreading their seeds so that they can grow in new places. Young plants don't want to be too close to the parent plant because they need sunshine to grow and nutrients from the soil to make them healthy. They don't have legs so how do they move? In lots of different ways... The shape of seeds gives us a clue about how they will travel.



Conkers.

Burying Animals such as squirrels bury acorns and other nuts in the ground in the autumn so that they have a food supply over the winter. If they forget where they put them the acorn seeds will grow into oak trees.

Eating

Red berries are very attractive to birds who will gobble them up! The seeds in the fruit go straight through the bird's digestive system so when the bird does a dropping, the seed comes out too. The poo acts as a fertilizer which helps the seed to grow.



Hawthorn Berries.

Seed Dispersal

Sticking

Many seeds come in a case covered in spikes or hooks which catch on to the hair of animals. By the time they drop off, the animal will have carried them to a different place. This is how "sticky buds" work from goose grass. Back in 1948, whilst out walking, inventor George de Mestral noticed how the burrs (seed heads) from a kind of thistle called burdock caught on to his dog's hair and his clothes because of their tiny little hooks. This gave him the idea of velcro which is used around the world to this day!



Flying

When the wind blows, dandelion clock seeds fly through the air like mini parachutes. Sycamore trees have "helicopter" seeds which spin around and fly away from the tree.



Sycamore "helicopter" seeds.

Floating

Some seeds fall into water and are carried to new places. Alder trees grow by river banks. Their "wings" have air pockets which help them to float downstream until they land and germinate on different soil. Coconuts from palm trees can float in the sea for thousands of miles until they reach a new country.



Sprinkling

Poppy seed pods are like capsules with little openings around the edge at the top. When the wind blows the seed head sways from side to side and the seeds are gently shaken out like pepper from a pepper pot. As they are so light they usually land some distance away from the plant.



Poppy seeds.

Did you know...?

Gorse flowers smell of coconuts!

Exploding!

Some seed pods are made of two halves. When the plant dies, they're all that's left. They shrivel up but can't take the heat which is when they explode! In the late summer you can actually hear gorse bushes doing this...



Gorse flowers.

Air Plants.

Ever heard of a plant that can live off thin air? That's what these do! The real name for

them is "epiphytes". They don't put their roots into soil but grow on other plants getting their nutrients from the air and rain and little bits of compost that collect on the tree bark. They don't harm the plant they're growing on.

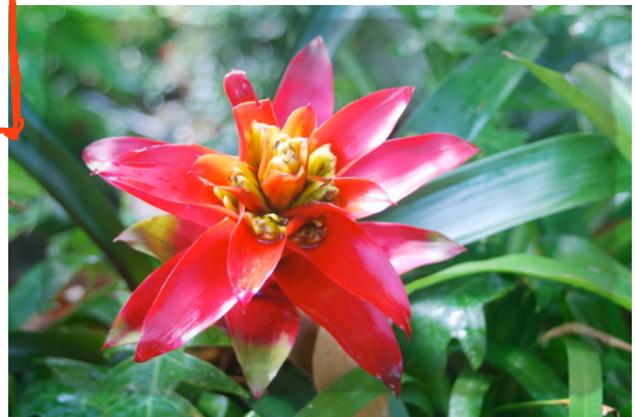
Being an epiphyte helps them to succeed since the higher up they go, the more light there is to help them grow. There are over 30,000 epiphytes in the world! Many of them are found at high altitudes in mountain forests such as misty cloud forests.

Orchids

These delicate flowers make up the second largest family of flowering plants. There are twice as many orchid species as there are bird species in the world. More than half of orchids are epiphytes and they are often found in tropical places.

Did you know...?
epiphytes can even grow on telephone wires!

Lichens are a cross between a fungus (like a toadstool - not a plant) and a alga - a very simple kind of plant. They grow on trees and even the on rooftops of houses. They show that in the places where they grow the air is very clean.



Bromeliads

The bromeliad is a member of the pineapple family. In the depths of the Amazon rainforest, South America one kind of bromeliad has a special job to do. When it rains its waxy leaves collect water and make a miniature pond high up in the tree tops. Poison arrow frogs carry their tadpoles one at a time up to the pond where they stay until they turn into frogs and crawl back down the tree to the forest floor.

Did you know...?
the tank bromeliad can hold 9 litres of water!

Did you know...?
epiphytes produce many more seeds than plants which grow on the ground since there's less chance of them finding a good place to grow.

Beware of the cling-ons!

Don't get these parasites mixed up with innocent epiphytes! Parasites are plants that cling on to others so much that they eventually kill them! Take the strangler fig for example, a giant tree which begins life dangling its roots off the branch of another old tree. As it grows it slowly wraps its roots around the host's trunk. It looks like the host tree is strangled to death! Mean! That's why in Spanish its name translates as "killer tree" but actually they simply outlive them.



Strangler Fig Tree

Lichens

The Amazing & Strange World of Plants

(and you thought plants were boring!!)

The **Coco de mer** is a kind of **palm tree** only found in the Sechelles islands. Its other name is the "double coconut" and it has the biggest seeds of any tree in the world weighing about **20 kg** - about the weight of a full suitcase. And yes it does look a bit like a bottom!



The **Mimosa**

pudica from Central and South America has **feathery type leaves** which fold up when you touch them. They also do this in the evening when it cools down and starts to get dark.



Pitcher Plant



A pitcher is another name for a jug. These harmless looking plants entice insects towards them with their **attractive colours** and **sweet smelling aromas**. Yet no sooner do the insects land on the edge of the flower than they slip over the edge and fall deep inside into a pool of sticky liquid. The slippery sides make it impossible for the insects to escape so they quickly drown. The liquid then dissolves the insects until they turn into a kind of soup, full of the **nutrients** which the plant needs. It can't get these nutrients from the soil like most plants, because it grows on swampy ground which is lacking in minerals.

Look - it even has a lid to keep the rain out!

Venus fly trap

This ferocious feeder needs extra minerals to stay healthy in addition to the energy it gets from **photosynthesis**. It has very sensitive hairs on the inside of its leaf which when touched by an insect or spider will set off a timer. If only one hair is touched, nothing will happen but if another is **triggered** within 20 seconds of the first then the trap will instantly snap shut!



The spikes interlock so that the

prey can't escape. Then **digestive juices**, like those found in your stomach dissolve the soft parts of the creature over 5 to 12 days. Any tough parts, such as an **exo-skeleton*** are blown away in the wind when the trap opens again. So this plant is a **carnivore!**

* an **exo-skeleton** is the tough outside part (exterior) of some kinds of mini-beast, which they have instead of a skeleton on the inside.

Resurrection fern

The resurrection fern is found in south-east USA. It is an air plant which attaches itself to the bark of trees (see page 5) and can survive approximately 100 years without water! During times of drought (when there's no rain) it curls up and appears to be dead. But years later, with just a little water this amazing fern can spring back to life or resurrect! It can lose up to 97% of its water content before it really does die whereas most plants can't lose more than about 12%.

Did you know...?

a resurrection fern has even been taken out to space!

Did you know...?

Ferns were much more common in the time of the dinosaurs and there were some gigantic ones!

The Holly and the Ivy

Ivy is a climbing plant often seen crawling up the sides of houses and trees. If the stem is not cut it can kill the tree. But its very good cover for birds on otherwise blank walls and fences and makes quite a nice Christmas decoration too.



The **Rafflesia** - This is the biggest flower **IN THE WORLD!** It measures 1 metre wide (diameter) and weighs over 11kg! It is found in the **South East Asian tropical rainforests** but spends most of the time hidden as a few unseen threads in the roots or stem of another plant, a bit like fungi, which suddenly appears from out of the ground in certain weather conditions. In fact it is rather unusual since it has no leaves, roots or stem. Sometimes though, you will see a cabbage-like bud which grows over about 9 months. Eventually this will open as a flower but be quick, because within a week it will have disappeared!



This fantastic flower has a nickname in the local language - "**the Corpse flower**" because it stinks of rotting flesh - yuk! This fabulous odour attracts flies instead of bees, necessary for transferring the **pollen** from a male flower to another stinking female flower. There isn't much time to do this though, as the flowers only stay open for about 5 to 7 days and two need to be open at the same time. If the flies manage to move the pollen then the female flowers can grow seeds. **Tree shrews** eat the fruits which contain the seeds and help to spread them around (see "Seed Dispersal" page 3).

What Plants Do...

Ok, so they don't leap around or do tricks, but one thing's for sure, we couldn't live without them!

Oxygen

Plants breathe out **oxygen** which is what our bodies need from the air. We breathe out **carbon dioxide** which is what plants need for **photosynthesis** (the way they get their energy – see page 2).

Carbon Dioxide

Many of the things we use every day such as electricity and transport run on “**fossil fuels**” – coal, oil and gas. These put extra **carbon dioxide** into the air. If this gas reaches the higher atmosphere, it can add to an invisible blanket up there and cause **global warming**, so we need plants to suck it up before it gets that far.

Food, glorious food!

Even if you don't like **vegetables**, most of our food comes from plants, such as the wheat to make bread and pizza bases, the potatoes that make crisps and chips and the fruit that flavours yoghurts. Even if we eat a lot of **meat** we still need to feed plants to the farm animals.

Beauty and relaxation

Green is a colour which calms us down and being out in the countryside has been proven to help our **mental health**. It **relaxes** us. Many paintings are of countryside scenes. And what better way to relax than to sit under the shade of a tree or walk through a cool forest on a hot summer's day?

Umbrellas

Without the **roots** of plants to hold soil together, it can wash away during heavy rainfall and cause **flooding** and **mud slides**. These have been known to wash whole villages away and has often happened in places where they have chopped down all the trees. The tree tops or “**canopy**” of rainforests act like big umbrellas, stopping all of the rain hitting the ground at once and preventing the healthy top soil from washing away.



Weather Gauge

Plants help to **cool** places down. Cities are usually hotter than the countryside because there's so much concrete about and not many plants. Some modern buildings are now being planted with “**living roofs**” that act as blankets to keep them warm in the winter and in the summer keep them cool by soaking up all the excess heat.

Evaporation of water from plants can also affect how much rainfall a place gets which is one of the reasons it rains so much in a rainforest.

Shelter

We may not live in a **forest**, but there are many people who still do. Plus let's not forget all the **wildlife** that lives in the shelter of plants, whether they're **trees, grasses or seaweeds**.





Wild Arum

There are so many names for this odd looking plant because of its odd looking flower and brightly coloured berries like:
 Cuckoo Pint
 Lords & Ladies
 Dead man's finger &
 Jack in the Pulpit!
 The red berries are highly poisonous.

What's in a name?



Herb Robert

This plant was used like antiseptic cream on wounds and was also used a lot to treat toothaches and nosebleeds!

Latin names
 When you buy a packet of seeds you may find two names on it. One is in English. This is called the common name. But to stop people from getting confused, especially from other countries, there is also a scientific name which is in Latin and is used all over the world. This usually has two parts, one which tells us which family the plant belongs to so it can be grouped with other similar plants.

Did you know...?
 Weeds are just another name for wild plants which grow where we don't want them to!

Hart's Tongue Fern.

The word hart comes from an old English word meaning stag or male deer. The shape of this fern must have reminded people of the deer's tongue.



Did you know...?
 In the past people thought that a plant could be used as a medicine for the part of the body it looked like!

The scientific name for bluebells is "hyacinthoides non-scripta" and is in the same family of plants as another spring flower, the hyacinth which has the scientific name "hyacinthus orientalis". The family they both belong to is called hyacinthaceae and they both grow from bulbs.



Common Speedwell

People going on a long journey would be sent with the words "God speed you well" which meant "have a safe journey" and would often be given a speedwell flower to protect them on their way.

Can't see the woods for the trees.

From small acorns grow mighty oaks.

"What's in a name? A rose by any other would smell as sweet." Shakespeare

All the flowers of tomorrow are in the seeds of today

Ask an adult what these sayings to do with plants mean....

The grass is always greener on the other side

To everything there is a season.

Plants for every place

Plants grow all over the world, but like animals, they all like to live in different kinds of places, some hot, some cold, wet or dry, light or dark. Plants come in all shapes and sizes and this helps them to survive in various conditions. We can say they are “adapted” to their environments.

Cacti

Living in the desert, you need to survive long periods of time without any water. Cacti are especially suited to the desert environment - whatever water they find, they are careful not to lose it. This is why they have **spikes**. The spikes of a cactus reflect sunlight and fine hairs can trap moisture. They protect the plant from getting eaten by desert creatures. The spikes are in fact **LEAVES!** But can you imagine with big wide leaves, the sun could shine on them and evaporate all the water. This is also why their **stems** are quite fat and feel waxy, so that the juicy bits can be in the middle and won't easily evaporate away. They can shrink in times of drought and double in size when it has rained. It's also the stem that does the photosynthesis (makes the food - see page 2).

Their **roots** can go quite deep searching for water. Or alternatively they can be shallow, to suck up water, even the morning dew, before the sun dries it all up. In spring time cacti grow flowers for a short length of time followed by fruits such as the prickly pear.



Prickly Pear Cactus

Did you know...?

there are even kinds of cacti growing in rainforests! (They're just less prickly!)



Seaweed

What's the difference between sea water and rain water? Its **salty!** So any plant that lives in the sea must be able to survive in salty water. The other problem is the tides. About twice a day the **tides** move in out out exposing parts of the beach that were underwater. Seaweeds have to be able to survive being totally soaked to being dried in the sun. That's why they can feel slimy; it stops them from drying out.

Different coloured seaweeds are found at different places the shore line as some can survive out of water for a very long time while others would dry up after a short time. Have a look next time you are at the seaside. Generally speaking **greens** are found on the upper shore, they can survive the longest out of water; **browns** are in the middle and **reds** are on the lower shore.

Phyto-plankton are **microscopic** plants found in oceans and rivers. Plankton is from a Greek word meaning “wanderers” as they float through the water. They are eaten by tiny, sometimes microscopic animals called zoo-plankton and also by krill which then get eaten by fish - so the phyto-plankton are at the bottom of the **food chain**. Baleen whales also eat huge amounts of plankton. They survive better in cooler waters such as those found around Antarctica.

Evergreens

Evergreen trees and other plants have leaves the whole year through so they are always or ever green. Many have needle shaped leaves to avoid losing water through **evaporation** and can survive on much less water than broadleaved trees. Holly leaves are flat and not like needles at all, but their shiny surface does the same job. They save their energy and **nutrients** by not having to grow new leaves all at once.

In the rainforest conditions are similar all year round so the trees can keep going all year too and gradually loses some leaves while new ones replace them.

Evergreens are better than broadleaved trees at growing where the soil is poor because broadleaved trees lose lots of nutrients when they lose their leaves and have to get them back from the soil. Evergreens don't have that problem. Although broadleaves will rot back down into the soil, in colder climates this takes time so its best to be an evergreen!



Broadleaved beech tree.

Broadleaves

Broadleaf forests have trees whose leaves fall off in the autumn. They are **deciduous**. As the weather gets colder it would be hard for the leaves to survive so instead the tree loses them and shuts down for the winter. This means the tree can save all its energy for the spring time when the weather warms up. With no leaves they do not photosynthesise (make food) during this time. It is similar to when an animal goes into **hibernation**.

In tropical parts of the world plants lose their leaves during the dry season since they can't survive very well without water.

Some plants flower at the time when they don't have any leaves as this increases the chance of insects being able to see them to **pollinate** them and is better for wind pollination too. To learn about pollination see page 3.

Mountain flora

and you'll find an astonishing array of plant life. Often they are small and close to the ground because they are trying to keep warm and stay out of the wind. Being small is useful in the winter because plants can stay protected from the wind underneath a blanket of snow.

Despite the rain and bad mountain weather, the soil is only thin and doesn't soak up the water easily and the winds quickly dry out plants' leaves. That's why mountain plants have feel waxy, just like desert plants, to stop the water that's inside from evaporating.

Ferns

Ferns don't have flowers or seeds, they have **spores** instead which land in new places and start to grow. Often you can see these spores underneath their leaves or "**fronds**" - they look like brown dots or lines. They can survive in a variety of habitats where other flowering plants would struggle, from



Did you know...?

In Victorian times it was the fashion to plant ferns in your garden and they were crazy about orchids too!

mountains to deserts. However, they are mainly found in damp, shady forests, particularly tropical rainforests, but also in rock crevices and on wetlands. At least a quarter of fern species are epiphytes, growing in rainforests and living off thin air - see page 5, "Air Plants".

Under Threat

One in five of the world's plants are threatened species!

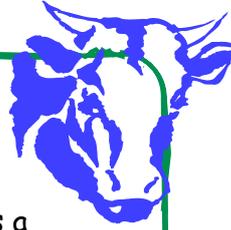


Deforestation

Rainforests are being destroyed at a rate of an area the size of a football pitch every second. Sometimes they're chopped down and sometimes they're burnt down. This can be to make space to graze cattle, grow soya which is fed to farm animals and palm oil, an ingredient in many items we buy from the shops ranging from soap to cereals!

Farming

With so many people in the world we need to use some land for farming, but sometimes the land is a precious habitat. For example, meadows - fields full of flowers, have been compared to rainforests contain so much wildlife, many of them tiny insects which become food for birds and other species. Yet nearly all of the meadows in Britain have been lost since the First World War when many of them were dug up to grow food. Grazing animals can sometimes put wild plants at risk.



Acid Rain

When pollution from cars, factories and power stations goes in the air, the gases mix with water droplets in the clouds which fall as acid rain. It can have the following effects:



1. dissolve and wash away nutrients from the soil which plant need and release aluminium in to the soil.
2. wear away the protective coating of leaves so that they can't photosynthesise properly.
3. weaken the plant so it is more likely to become diseased.

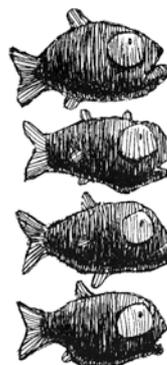
Acid rain can fall miles from the source of the pollution and years ago many of the dead pine forests in Scandinavia were blamed on pollution that came from Britain.

Climate Change

This is quite a new threat to plants. As the weather patterns around the world are changing, so are the conditions that the plants grow in. If they are used to wet weather and it becomes dryer, they won't be able to survive as easily as they aren't designed to live in those conditions. Its the same if the weather becomes wetter too. Rising sea levels could spread salty water into fresh water. Yet in this story of survival, it may be that different plants may grow where they have never done before so it's not all bad news!

A Reason For Hope – The Millenium Seed Bank

Kew Gardens in London has an aim, to secure the future of a quarter of wild plant species in the world. It is going to do this by keeping some of the seeds of these plants in what's called a "seed bank". At the moment they have already successfully collected and stored one out of every ten plant species. Eventually they hope to have collected 1 billion seeds from the world's rarest and most useful plants.



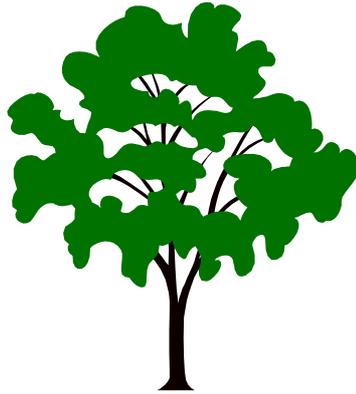
Fish Tomatoes

Science has found ways of moving something useful from one species to another, to help it survive better. This can be used on the food we eat. For example, in 1991 the anti-freeze gene found in an arctic fish body was be mixed with a tomato seed to make the tomatoes frost resistant, so they wouldn't die if it suddenly got colder. This is called "genetically modified". Sounds good but no-one knows the long term effects of this technology, and if the genes mix with wild flowers, by bees carrying over their pollen, this could have many unintended consequences.

Get Active!

Bark rubbings

Take a sheet of white paper and place it on some tree bark. Then rub a wax crayon over it and the pattern should come through.



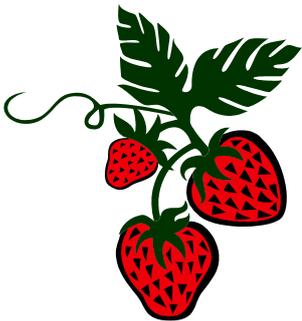
Hug a tree!

Blindfold a friend and lead them to a tree. They can feel the bark before you lead them away from it, spin them around, take off the blindfold and see if they can identify which tree they hugged!



Pick your own!

Throughout the spring and summer you may see signs saying "pick your own"! This is a great way to spend some time picking strawberries, raspberries and all your favourite fruits. In September you can even look for blackberries in hedgerows.



Grow your own

Spring is the time to plant those seeds and watch them grow - try flowers such as marigolds and vegetables like lettuces and green beans. Have a go and watch them grow!

Eye Spy

Go for a walk, look in garden or go to a park and see what you can find. Can you spot any of these spring time plants? Have a look on the Woodland Trust's Nature Detective website for ID sheets for each of the seasons be it Spring flowers or autumn watch.



Planting trees

If you want to plant trees the best time is October to April (but not Dec-Feb for evergreens).

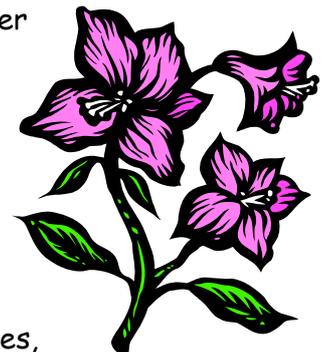
Paint a Plant

Err, you just need paint and paper for this one.



Press Flowers

Collect leaves from different trees and petals from flowers. Put them in-between two sheets of clean paper and put it between some newspaper. Then put a pile of heavy books on top and leave them for about 3 months when they will be pressed. Then gently use tweezers to pick up the thicker end of the petal or stem to create your own pictures, bookmarks and cards.



Collage

Collect leaves, petals, twigs, and get out the glue!

Rainy Days!



Whoops! Can you find the missing plants?

- Bromeliad
- Cactus
- Coco de mer
- Coconut
- Dandelion
- Fern
- Gorse
- Grass
- Hawthorn
- Nettles
- Orchid
- Poppy
- Rafflesia
- Seaweed
- Sycamore

s	c	o	c	o	d	e	m	e	r	a	m	r
d	e	f	r	b	n	s	e	l	t	t	e	n
w	r	a	s	c	r	b	n	d	e	r	e	o
e	h	a	w	t	h	o	r	n	r	e	f	i
r	c	x	f	e	e	i	m	i	v	h	l	l
o	c	o	b	f	e	s	d	e	e	c	y	e
m	r	u	c	e	l	d	r	e	n	t	t	d
a	b	s	n	o	n	e	r	o	u	i	r	n
c	f	i	e	w	n	n	s	k	g	p	a	a
y	p	p	o	p	q	u	l	i	r	l	p	d
s	s	a	r	g	s	u	t	c	a	c	s	t

Fit the answers to the clues in the spaces. The letters in the square boxes will spell out the name of a sweet juicy drink which comes from plants. Answers on the back

Stinging leaves							
They grow after pollination							
The biggest seed in the world				/		/	
They attract bees to a flower							
A prickly desert plant							
Smells like coconuts							

Crazy About Conservation!

We'd love to include some of your letters, jokes, poems, stories and pictures in the Yippittee, so if you have any then please write to us or e-mail them to....

Crazy about Conservation! YPTE, Suite 29, Yeovil Innovation Centre, Barracks Close, Copse Road, Yeovil, Somerset, BA22 8RN
or e-mail us at... info@yppte.org.uk



Pitcher plant



Rafflesia



Bromeliad

Orchid



Hawthorn

Mimosa



Ivy



Venus fly trap

Match the pictures with the labels.

You're joking!

What kind of tree can you fit into your hand?
A palm tree!

Why did the tomato blush?
Because it saw the salad dressing!

What did the beaver say to the tree?
Its been nice gnawing you!

What did the dog yell when it saw the pieces of a fallen tree?
Bark, bark!



Check out our factsheets about wildlife and environmental issues on www.yppte.org.uk
You'll also find more editions of the Yippittee in the download area.
Why not start with "Save The Plants" - <http://www.yppte.org.uk/environmental/save-the-plants/31>

Answers from page 14:
nettles;
seeds;
coco de mer;
petals;
cactus;
gorse.
The letters spell out the word "Nectar".

Websites:

Kew Gardens <http://www.kew.org/learn/kids/index.htm>
Enchanted Learning <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/plants/>
Nature Detectives <http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk/>
Plants of the Rainforest <http://rainforests.mongabay.com>