



Plants and fungi

Worksheet 1

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Plant warfare

Imagine you are a plant. How can you keep hungry herbivores away? You can't escape. There is no place for you to hide.

What strategies can you develop to save yourself?

You have several options. You can decide to avoid herbivores completely, by growing in places which they can't access. For example, elephants will not eat you if you decide to grow on high mountains. You can also trick your enemies into eating non-essential parts of you. So if you need flowers for reproduction, you can produce small, inconspicuous ones. Or you can make sure your leaves are so difficult to digest that the herbivores won't bother.

You can also summon the enemies of your enemies to your aid. Give food and shelter to colonies of ants, as some acacia trees do. Since giraffes and antelopes do not enjoy chewing ants, so they will leave you alone! All you need to do is to produce a bit of nectar for your 'soldiers'.

Finally, you can confront your enemies by using poison. Some of the most noxious substances come from plants. You can also grow thorns and sharp spines, like rose bushes and cacti do, or cover your leaves with hairs in order to irritate herbivore mouths.

As you can see, you will be able to survive, although you will need some time to set up your strategy – say a few hundred thousand years!

1. Find words in the text which mean the following:

<i>possibilities</i>	
<i>reach</i>	
<i>not easily noticed</i>	
<i>call</i>	
<i>face your enemies</i>	
<i>poisonous</i>	

2. True or False? Choose T or F. Then, circle the mistakes.

- Many plants need to defend themselves against herbivores.
- Some plants grow close to herbivores so they can be eaten more easily.
- Acacia trees support ants as a protection against larger herbivores.
- Some plants produce lethal poisons to protect themselves.
- Roses and cacti are attractive to herbivores.

True	False

3. Investigate and find the names of some poisonous 3 plants.

4. Vocabulary

<i>to keep</i>	
<i>to hide</i>	
<i>yourself</i>	
<i>hungry</i>	
<i>avoid</i>	
<i>bother</i>	
<i>bushes</i>	

<i>shelter</i>	
<i>confront</i>	
<i>poison</i>	
<i>noxious</i>	
<i>thorns</i>	
<i>sharp</i>	
<i>although</i>	