

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

Grades 4 & 5 Curriculum



Unusual Plants
Picture Card Set



James Henderson, Gulf South Research Corporation
www.forestryimages.org

Venus Flytrap

A small herb that grows in the southeastern U.S., the venus flytrap is carnivorous and supplements its diet by capturing insects in the sticky traps at the tip of each leaf. When lightly touched in rapid succession, tooth-like protrusions along the edge of each leaf snap shut, effectively capturing the meal. If the weight of the intruder is not worth the energy needed to digest it, the trapping mechanism doesn't activate.





Gary M. Stolz, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service www.fws.gov

Saguaro Cactus

The saguaro cactus is a native plant of the American southwest. A large member of the cactus family, this succulent is slow growing and long lived. Shoots grow from the side of the parent plant every 75 years. A single plant can live 200 years! Birds and other small desert animals nest in its thick pulpy stem, and Native Americans of the southwest used its ribs in construction. Like many other desert plants, the saguaro cactus is night blooming and has a well-developed root system to secure precious water and nutrients.





Chris Evans, The University of Georgia
www.forestryimages.org

Yellow Pitcher Plant

This carnivore grows in bogs or at the water's edge from the Carolinas to Louisiana. Its upright, nectar-filled, tubular neck with reddish purple interior attracts insects. Next, downward pointing hairs direct the prey deeper and downward where digestive secretions finish the task of meal preparation.





Mary Ellen (Mel) Harte, www.forestryimages.org

Arctic Willow

This plant is a small creeping low shrub that inhabits arctic and sub-arctic environments. It has the distinction of being the northern woodiest plant of the planet. It is slow growing and has an average lifespan of 235 years.





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Corpse Plant

SMELLY!! Its name is an accurate description of this flower's fragrance. The corpse plant has only 1 flower per plant, the largest flower in the world, and it blooms infrequently. Its habitat is the equatorial forests of Indonesia, but botanical institutes have successfully raised this giant wonder of the plant kingdom. Among the successful attempts was the specimen that bloomed at the University of Connecticut in July 2004. The plant weighed 89.5 lbs., had a 21 inch diameter, and was 4 feet 11 inches tall.





Gary M. Stolz, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service www.fws.gov

Prickly Pear

This cactus is a native of the southwestern deserts in the U.S., and varies in height from 12 inches to 6 or 7 feet. Parts of this plant are of medical interest because they have the potential to lower unhealthy cholesterol and regulate blood sugar. The large fleshy pads that might be mistaken for fleshy leaves are actually the plant's branches and stems. The actual leaves are the spiny protrusions that cover these pads. Both the fruits and pads are edible.





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Bug Plant

The bug plant, a native of South Africa, is not carnivorous in the true sense of the word. Although it does trap insects on its sticky hairs, it does not digest them. Instead, it holds the insects as a free meal for assassin bugs. The plant and insect together represent a symbiotic relationship. The plant captures the prey for the insect and dines on the fecal droppings of the insect!





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Bull-thorn Acacia

The Bull-thorn acacia is best known for its symbiotic relationship with a species of ant that lives in its hollowed-out thorns. Bull-thorn acacias do not have the bitter alkaloids usually located in the leaves that defend against ravaging insects and other animals. The bull-thorn acacia's ants fulfill that role. The ants are a defense mechanism for the tree. The ants live in the hollowed-out thorns for which the tree is named. In return, the tree supplies the ants with protein-lipid nodules, called Beltian bodies, from its leaflet tips and carbohydrate-rich nectar from glands on its leaf stalk.





James Henderson, Gulf South Research Corporation
www.forestryimages.org

Spoonleaf Sundew

The spoonleaf sundew is a short-lived herbal insectivore found in open bogs and along sandy shores from Newfoundland to Minnesota and in Montana and Idaho. The long thin blades are covered with insect-trapping sticky hairs on the upper surface. The flowers bloom in clusters on leafless stems that grow from the side of the plant and curve upward to a height of 8 inches. Like other insect trapping plants, the sundew is able to grow in nutrient poor soils or sand and has adapted by supplementing its nutritional needs with animal protein.





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Living Stones

These unusual plants inhabit the desert environments of South Africa. They adapt so well to their environment that they went undiscovered until the mid 1800's! Living stones grow close to the ground and adapt to the color of their surroundings. They produce flowers only when the desert is in full bloom, and they are low on the food chain as a meal of choice. Their 1-inch height makes them virtually invisible. Two fleshy leaves attached at the outer perimeter with a bisecting fissure provide protection and food for the newly emerging flower and fruit that appear in early autumn. The plants require well-drained soil and 4 to 5 hours of strong sunlight to thrive.



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