

Plants Bite Back

- 1** Look at the map on pages 6–7. What is the purpose of this map? Where can you find the giant saguaro cactus? What type of tree can be found in Australia?
- 2** On pages 8–9, the author describes carnivorous plants. What does the word ‘carnivorous’ mean? Why are carnivorous plants sometimes called ‘insectivorous’ plants?
- 3** Read about the Venus flytrap on pages 10–11. How are the four pictures across the bottom of the page connected? How do they help you to understand the text?
- 4** What are pages 18–19 about? How do the text and main picture work together to give you information about this topic? Summarise how a pitcher plant catches its prey.
- 5** Read about sundew plants on pages 20–21. Explain why the plant was given this name. How big are the smallest and largest sundew plants?
- 6** What is the title of the book? Read page 24 and think about how the text relates to the title. What reasons does the author give for recommending you be careful around strange plants?

7 Read about poison ivy on pages 26–27. Explain the effects that people feel when they have been stung by poison ivy. Give an example of how you could get stung without ever touching the plant.

8 Turn to pages 28–29 about stinging nettles. Describe how a nettle plant stings. How do the labelled pictures at the bottom of the page help you to understand the text?

9 Pages 36–37 describe how the upas tree became a legend. Explain where the legend came from and what it said about the tree. Why did the tree become known as the ‘tree of poisons’?

10 Turn to pages 44–45. What does the author say that you may find surprising? What reasons does the author give for why some poisonous plants can be useful?

Answers

- 1 to show where some of the world's scratching, stinging and biting plants grow; North America; the stinger tree
- 2 Something that eats only meat; their most common prey are insects.
- 3 They show the different stages / sequence of how the leaf closes to catch its prey; Answers will vary. Example answer: They show what the steps look like.
- 4 How a pitcher plant catches its prey; the text describes what happens and the picture shows what this looks like; the prey lands on the slippery edge of the pitcher, it smells nectar and climbs into the pitcher to get the nectar, it slips, splashes into the liquid and drowns.
- 5 The glue-like droplets on the tip of each hair sparkle like dew; no bigger than a shirt button and higher than a grown-up's waist.
- 6 *Plants Bite Back*; Answers will vary. If you touch or eat one, it could sting you, make you sick or even kill you.
- 7 sometimes an immediate sting, followed by itchy blisters which turn into oozing, crusted sores; Answers will vary. Example answer: from a pet or touching some sports equipment that touched the ivy
- 8 The spike pricks your skin, the tips break off and release acid, and the acid flows through the spikes into your skin; they show a close-up of the spikes and the labels give extra information about the different parts of the spikes.
- 9 The legend came from an article in the *London Magazine* in 1783, a Dutch traveller claimed vapours from the tree were deadly; because the legend said it was powerful enough to kill birds that flew over it and anyone who slept under it.
- 10 Answers will vary. Example answer: That some plant poisons can heal; foxglove poison can treat heart disorders, anti-cancer drugs are being made from the yew tree and rosy periwinkle.