



### Deserts

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**Deserts** are the driest places on Earth. **Deserts** get little rain.

Many **deserts** are hot. All **desert** plants must live without much water.

**Desert** plants have **adapted** to these hot, dry places.

## Kinds of Desert Plants

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Many **deserts** are known for their **succulent** plants. These plants store water in stems, **roots**, and leaves. **Cacti** are **succulents**. Grasses, wildflowers, shrubs, and small trees also live in **deserts**.

## Desert Plant Features

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**Desert** plants must store water as long as they can. Some plants have **shallow roots**. The **roots** soak up rain from a wide area. Some plants get water from fog and **dew**. Many **desert** plants have waxy coatings. The coatings **reflect** sunlight and stop water loss.

## Animals and Deserts

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Animals use **desert** plants for shelter and shade. Lizards live in the thick leaves of a yucca plant. Birds nest in **cacti**. **Desert** animals also get most of their water by eating plants. Animals eat plant **seeds** and fruit.

## Protecting Desert Plants

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People destroy **desert** plants for food and firewood. But these plants must be protected. Today many countries have laws that protect **desert** plants. Some national parks protect their plants too.

## Glossary Terms

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shallow - not deep

dew - moisture in the form of small drops that collect overnight on cool surfaces outside

reflect - to bounce or throw back light; to return sun rays  
root - the part of the plant that is underground

seed - the part of a plant that can grow into another plant

cactus - a plant covered in spines that is found in desert areas

desert - a dry area that gets little rain; many deserts are hot and sandy succulent - a desert plant that stores water

adapt - to change to fit into a new or different environment