

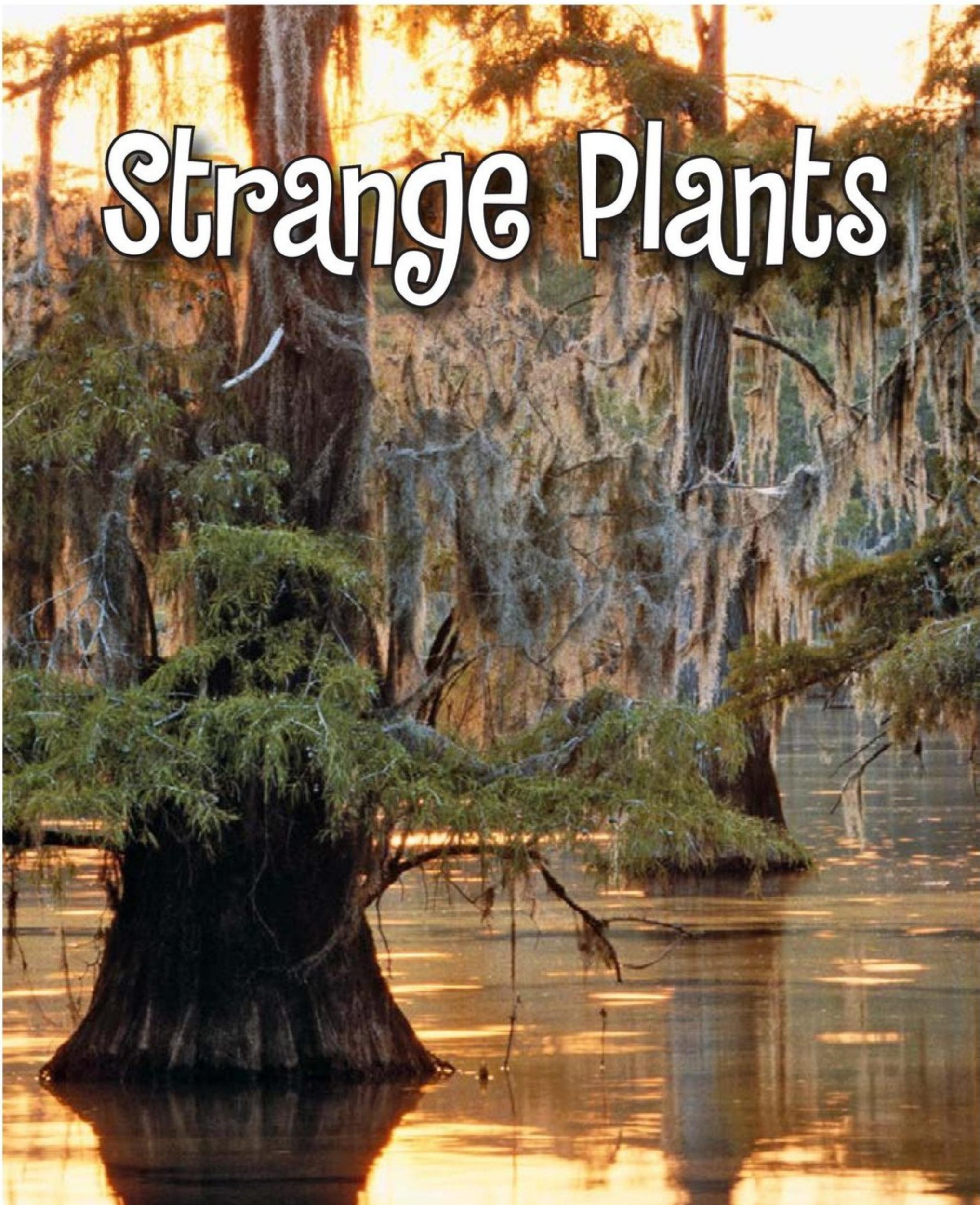
LEVELED BOOK • K

# Strange Plants

MULTI  
level  
K•N•Q

Written by Kira Freed

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# Strange Plants

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## Focus Question

What makes some plants strange?

## Words to Know

attract

moisture

branches

parasite

digests

plants

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### Correlation

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Gerbera daisies

When we think about **plants**, we often think of trees, flowers, and grass. Like most plants, these plants have green leaves. They also have roots growing into the ground.



Saguaro cactus

Some plants are not like most plants. This book is about some of these strange plants.

Plants called air plants live in trees high above the ground. Their roots are not buried in dirt. Instead, they grow on tree **branches**. They take **moisture** from the air, not from the soil as most plants do.



Air plants growing on swamp trees



Venus flytrap

Can you imagine plants that eat meat? Well, there are such plants. They eat insects, spiders, and even some other small animals. One well-known meat-eating plant is the Venus flytrap.

Its leaves look like traps.  
They have small spikes along  
their edges. When a critter walks  
inside a leaf, the leaf snaps shut.  
The critter is trapped.



Fly caught in a Venus flytrap

The sundew is also a meat-eating plant. It has many sticky hairs on its surface. Insects landing on it get stuck. Then the plant **digests** the insects. The giant sundew plant of Australia even eats small frogs!



Sundew plant



Dodder plant

Some plants steal food from other plants. The dodder plant sends rootlike parts into another plant. It sucks food and water from the plant. It is a **parasite**. A parasite lives off another living thing.

Many flowers have bad smells that **attract** insects. The stapelia flower smells like rotting meat. Flies like the smell, so they fly into the flower. Special powder gets on their bodies. They take the powder to other flowers. The flowers use the powder to make seeds and grow new plants.



Stapelia flower



Stone plants

Some plants look like stones. The plants in this picture are called “stone plants” or “living stones.” They live in very hot, dry places. They hold water very well. Their shape helps to hide them so that animals do not eat them.

Some cactus plants are covered with wool-like hairs. The “wool” protects them from daytime heat. It protects them from nighttime cold. The “wool” also helps the cactus plants hold moisture.



Old man cactus



Tree roots growing in rock

Some trees and shrubs grow out of solid rock. They grow up high where the wind blows strong. Their roots reach down into small cracks for moisture. As the roots grow, they split the rock.



Ant plant

Some plants have animals living inside them. Ant colonies live inside ant plants. They use spaces in the plant's stem as houses.

Some spaces are used for raising young ants. Other spaces are used for garbage. The ant plant uses some of this garbage for food.

There are many more kinds of strange plants. Bamboo makes noise when it grows. Some Australian orchids grow and flower completely underground. There are many amazing plants in the world.



Bamboo shoots

## Glossary

<b>attract</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	to draw someone or something near (p. 10)
<b>branches</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	parts of a tree that grow up and out from the trunk (p. 5)
<b>digests</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	processes food in the body and turns it into energy (p. 8)
<b>moisture</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a small amount of water in the form of a liquid or vapor (p. 5)
<b>parasite</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a plant or animal that grows on or feeds off another (p. 9)
<b>plants</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	living things that make their own food from sunlight and cannot move from place to place on their own (p. 3)

# Strange Plants

A Reading A-Z Level K Leveled Book

Word Count: 445



## Connections

### Writing

Choose two strange plants from the book. Write a paragraph comparing and contrasting the two plants.

### Science and Art

Choose one strange plant from the book to research further. Draw a diagram of the plant and label its important features.



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