

LEVELED BOOK • K

Strange Plants

Written by Kira Freed

www.readinga-z.com

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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 like 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 insect. The giant sundew plant of Australia even eats small frogs!



Sundew plant



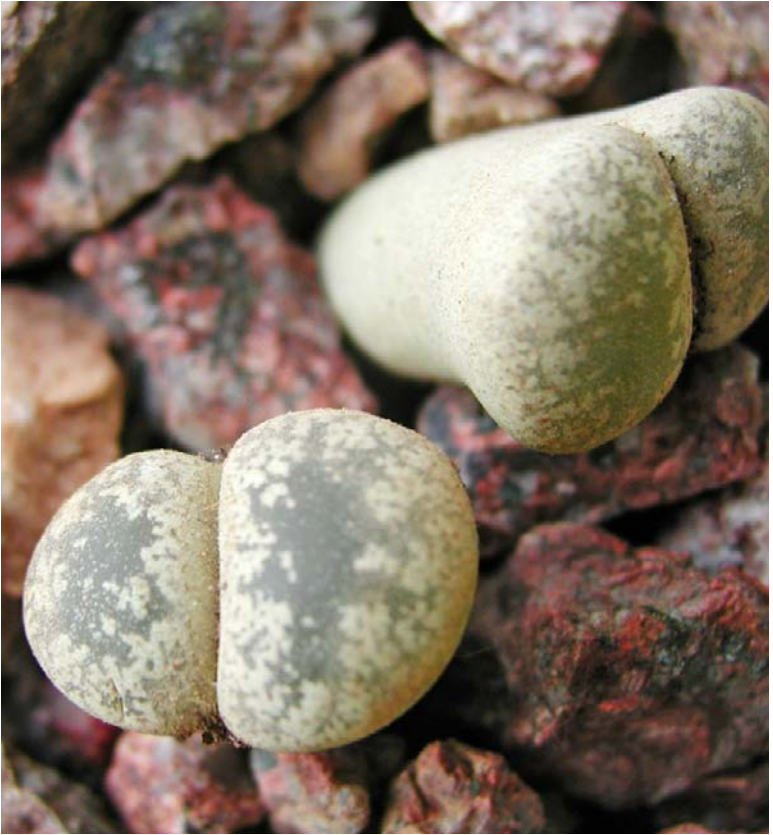
Dodder plant

Some plants steal food from other plants. The dodder plant sends root-like 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



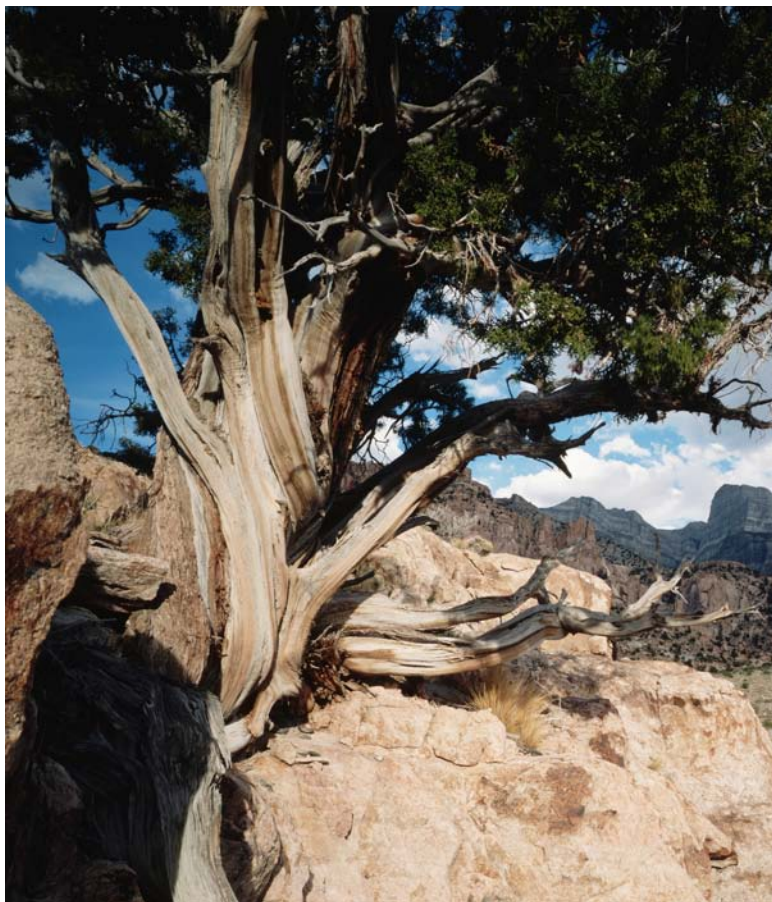
Stone plants

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

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A Reading A-Z Level K Leveled Book

Word Count: 445



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