

The right place to live



Background knowledge

Just as animals adapt to the places they live, so do plants. Plants are adapted to a wide variety of habitats. As a result, each plant has certain characteristics. Some are adapted to living on land while others live in water. Plants that grow on land usually have stiff stems to hold them upright, while water plants tend to have less rigid stems because the water supports them. Plants that live in dry climates like the desert have small or very few leaves. This cuts down on water loss through the leaves. Their stems may also be thick to store water. Plants that grow in shaded areas have large leaves to capture as much sunlight as possible.

Science activity

Look at the drawings below. Explain how each plant is suited to its habitat.



A cactus growing in a hot, dry area.

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Pond weed growing just under the surface of water.



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A daisy growing in mowed or grazed grass.

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Look at these two dandelion plants. Which one do you think grew under a tree? Explain.



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.....

Science investigation

! Take extra care - ask an adult to supervise you.

The pitcher plant and the Venus flytrap are examples of plants that eat insects. Use reference books and the Internet to do a report. Make sure to explain why the plant eats insects. Design and conduct an experiment to learn how a Venus flytrap captures insects.

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Science activity

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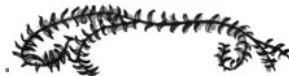


A cactus growing in a hot, dry area.

Its stem stores water. Its leaves have become spines to stop water loss.

Pond weed growing just under the surface of water.

It has a weak stem as the water supports it.



A daisy growing in mowed or grazed grass.

It grows close to the ground to survive mowing or grazing.

Look at these two dandelion plants. Which one do you think grew under a tree? Explain.

The dandelion with the bigger leaf grew under a tree. It needed a bigger leaf to get enough light.



Science investigation

⚠ The Venus flytrap and other insectivorous plants grow in soils that lack nitrates, since they obtain their nutrients from small animals. The young investigator should appreciate this example of adaptation for survival. If possible, purchase a Venus flytrap to study.