

## PLANTS!

**BRISTLEcone PINE**

These plants can survive for over 5,000 years, making them the oldest living organisms in the world. Today, scientists study the rings inside their trunks for clues to the planet's history.

**SUGAR CANE**

This grass has a stem full of sugar! People living on New Guinea began eating the wild sugar cane long ago. Today, the plants are usually boiled and refined to produce sugar.

**TOBACCO**

Local people from the Andes chewed the leaves of this plant because of the addictive chemical nicotine they contained. Today, smoking tobacco is responsible for hundreds of millions of deaths every year.

**FARMING**

Around 10,000 years ago, people began growing plants themselves for food. Farming has allowed human societies to support much bigger populations ever since.

**CHILLI PEPPER**

The fruits of this plant produce a chemical which causes a painfully hot sensation when eaten. People in ancient Peru and Ecuador developed a taste for their spicy kick.

**GRAPE VINES**

Ancient peoples across the Mediterranean fermented grapes to create wine, originally as medicine. Grapes are found naturally covered in fermenting yeast, which may have led to the discovery of wine.

**TEA PLANT**

Legend holds that Chinese Emperor Shennong discovered tea when a leaf accidentally fell into boiling water, and he enjoyed the invigorating drink.

**HEMP**

For thousands of years hemp's strong fibres have been used for making cloth. But today, growing and consuming the plant is illegal in many countries.

**HEMLOCK**

This plant's poison causes paralysis and even death. It was used in Ancient Greece for the ultimate punishment – the philosopher Socrates was executed with hemlock because of his revolutionary beliefs.

**COTTON**

The white fibres that develop around the fruit of this plant catch on the fur of passing animals, helping to disperse its seeds. Humans use the fibres to spin into thread for cloth.

**MAIZE**

This grass was bred by Central Americans to produce bigger fruit, resulting in the familiar corn cob. One Central American creation story described how humans were made from maize by the gods.

**COFFEE**

This seeds contain caffeine has it that an goatherd discovered when his goats strangely after coffee seeds billion cups drunk annual

**RUBBER TREE**

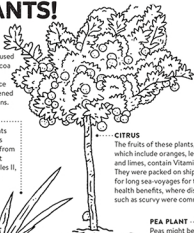
Rubber, made from the fluid of some plants, was first harvested in Central America to make balls for sport. Since then, rubber has been used to make waterproof clothes and machinery, among other things.

## PLANTS!



### CACAO

The seeds of this tree are used to produce chocolate. Cocoa 'beans' were first used in Central America to produce a bitter drink, later sweetened with sugar by the Europeans.



### CITRUS

The fruits of these plants, which include oranges, lemons and limes, contain Vitamin C. They were packed on ships for long sea-voyages for their health benefits, where diseases such as scurvy were common.

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pine. Legend  
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illy.

### PINEAPPLE

The unusual fruits of these plants were presented to rulers across Europe by explorers returning from South America. At one banquet organised by English King Charles II, a pineapple took centre stage.

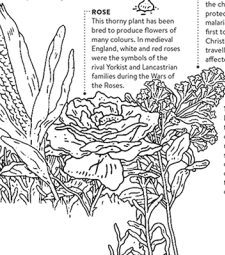


### PEA PLANT

Peas might be on your dinner plate tonight, but Austrian monk Gregor Mendel studied different generations of these plants and discovered the basics of genetics.

### GARLIC

Medieval doctors recommended a mixture of garlic, wine and bull's bile as a cure for eye infections. Garlic is more commonly used today in cooking.



### ROSE

This thorny plant has been bred to produce flowers of many colours. In medieval England, white and red roses were the symbols of the rival Yorkist and Lancastrian families during the Wars of the Roses.

### CINCHONA

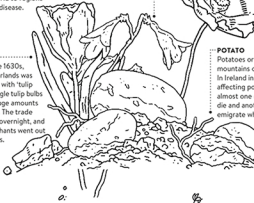
The bark of this tree contains the chemical quinine, which protects against the disease malaria. The recipe for the first tonic was developed by Christian priests who often travelled the world to regions affected by the disease.

### TWINFLOWER

This small forest flower was a favourite of Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus, who developed the *Systema Naturae*, the basis of the modern system for classifying living things.

### TULIP

During the 1630s, the Netherlands was overcome with 'tulip mania'. Single tulip bulbs sold for huge amounts of money. The trade collapsed overnight, and tulip merchants went out of business.



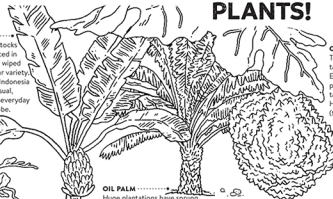
### POTATO

Potatoes originated in the mountains of the Andes in South America. In Ireland, a potato blight affected the crop, causing almost one million people to die and another million to emigrate.

### BANANA

Worldwide banana sales were nearly decimated in 1950 when a fungus wiped out the most popular variety. Originally grown in Southeast Asia and considered unpalatable, bananas are now an important snack across the globe.

# EXPLORER PLANTS!



**OIL PALM** .....  
Huge plantations have sprung up across the Indian Ocean and South America to produce vegetable oil from these plants' fruits, but this has endangered rainforests in the process.

**DURIAN** .....  
Durian fruit has such a terrible smell that it is banned on public transport in Singapore. To some, it tastes of cheese, onions and almonds, but others consider it a delicacy.



**RAFFLESIA** .....  
This plant has the largest flower in the world, with some growing to 1m in diameter. The flowers produce a disgusting rotting-meat smell to attract flies and beetles, which pollinate the plant.

**ANT-HOUSE PLANT** .....  
These plants contain structures called 'domatia' which ants build as secure homes inside the plant's stem. But, far from being a nuisance, the resident ants guard their new home from plant-eaters and vines.

**RICE** .....  
The tiny seeds of this plant are a staple food for billions of people across the globe. Scientists have created Golden Rice with extra Vitamin A through genetic engineering.

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f South America.  
1845, a disease  
tatoes caused  
million people to  
her one million to  
en famine struck.



**VENUS FLYTRAP** .....  
When a bug touches the trap, this meat-eating plant closes up and the bug is digested. Charles Darwin called it 'one of the most wonderful plants in the world'.

**COAST REDWOOD** .....  
These conifers are the tallest organisms on Earth, dwarfing other plants and animals. The tallest known example, Hyperion, stands 115m-tall (the height of 70 people!).



**BAMBOO** .....  
Bamboo is actually a giant grass and the fastest growing plant in the world. It can grow 93cm per day, and the largest species can reach more than 30m in height.

**SACRED LOTUS** .....  
Lotuses grow from the bottom of lakes and rivers to produce a stunning flower which is held above the water's surface. In the Hindu religion, the god Brahma is said to have been born from a lotus flower.

