

# Growing Plants

by Helen Scully





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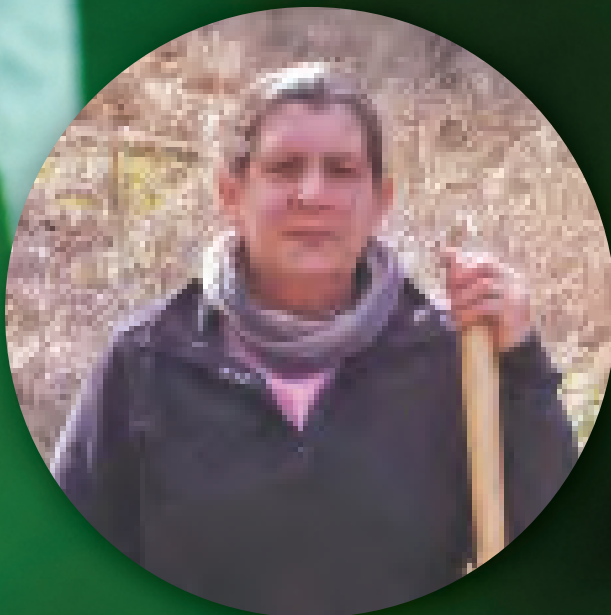
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HOW PLANTS

# GROW

Plants are found everywhere. They exist on land and in water. They grow on cold mountains and in hot deserts. Plants are very important to life on Earth. In fact, most living things need plants to survive. Plants provide clean air to breathe, food to eat, shelter, and medicine.



# Plant Needs

Like most living things, plants need food to grow. Plants are special, however. They make their own food. In order to make food, plants must have water, air, and sunlight.

Plants can look very different from one another. But most have the same basic parts. The parts of a plant work together. The parts make food from water, air, and sunlight.



giant sequoia

## Is It a Plant?

**Giant sequoia trees are some of the largest plants on Earth. They can grow taller than 75 meters (246 feet).**

**The watermeal plant is one of the smallest plants. Each of the grains is a tiny plant. These plants live on the surface of lakes and ponds.**

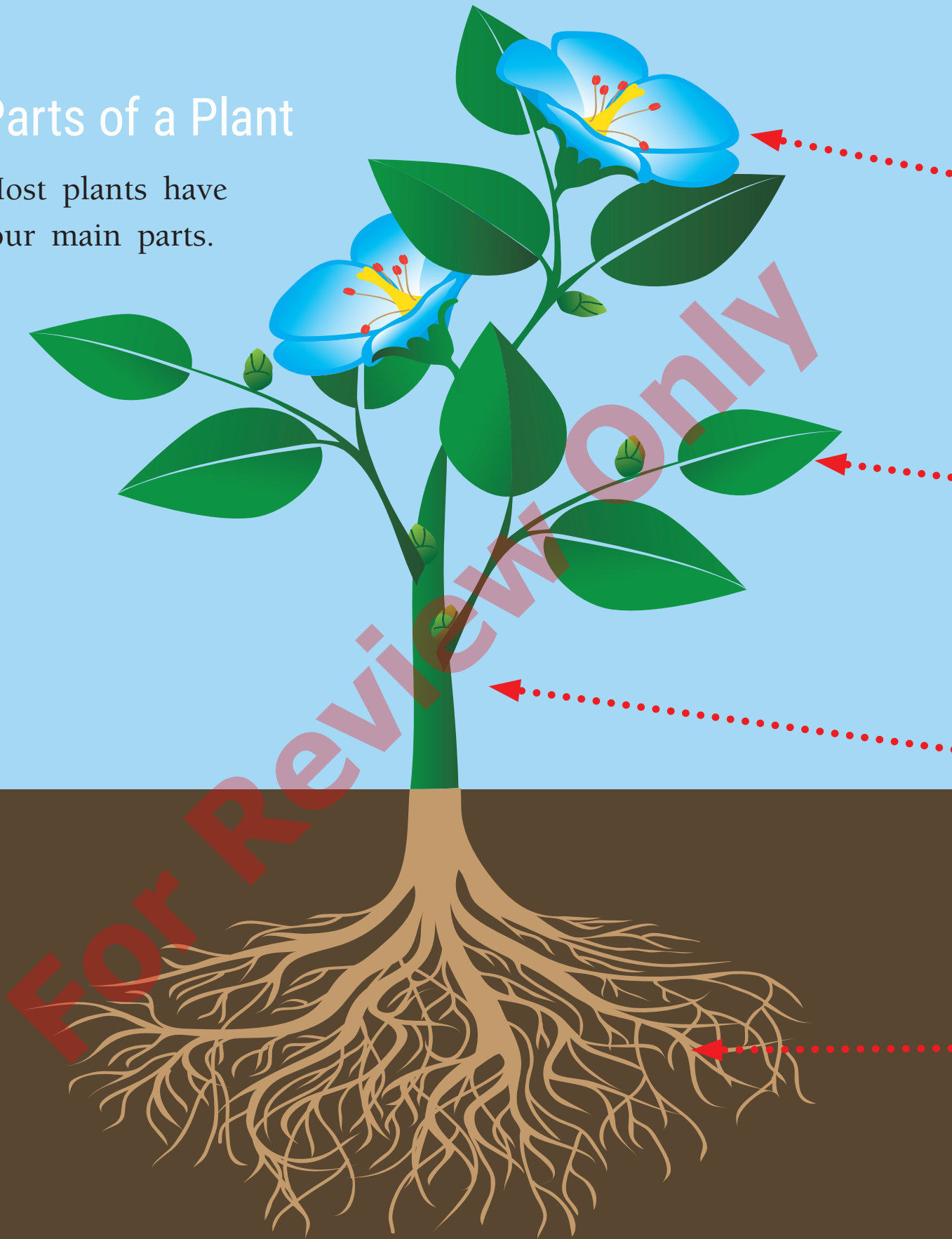


watermeal plant

**These two living things may not look at all alike. But they're both plants!**

# Parts of a Plant

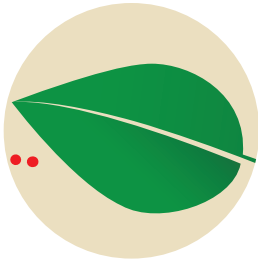
Most plants have four main parts.





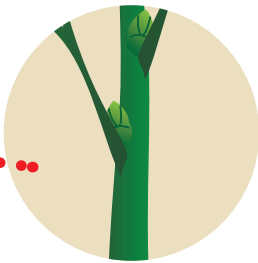
## Flowers

Many plants grow flowers. A flower is the part of the plant that makes seeds. The seeds will grow into new plants.



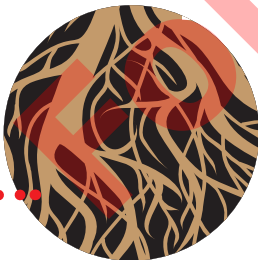
## Leaves

Most plant leaves are flat and green. They take in sunlight and air. The plant uses sunlight, air, and water to make food. Leaves also help keep water in the plant.



## Stem

The stem grows above the ground. It holds up the plant. It holds up the leaves to help them get sunlight. It also moves water and food to different plant parts.



## Roots

The roots grow down into the soil. Roots hold the plant in place. They take in water and important nutrients from the soil.



# Many Kinds of Plants

Plants grow in many different places. Because of this, their parts don't always look or work exactly the same way. But even if the parts are different, the plant still gets what it needs. Here are two examples of unusual plants that grow in special places.

Mosses are tiny plants that are green and soft. They don't have regular roots and stems. They grow low to the ground. They live on wet surfaces such as rocks and trees.



The saguaro cactus grows on rocky hills in the desert. It has spines instead of leaves. The spines stop animals from eating the cactus. This plant also has many stems. The cactus makes food in its stems.





People use plants  
to make fire.



## How People Use Plants

Humans have studied and grown plants for thousands of years. They have figured out good ways to use them. People make all sorts of things out of plants: paper, pencils, houses, baskets—even medicine.



## Plant Scientists

**Botany is the study of plants. A botanist is a person who studies plants. Some botanists search for new types of plants. Some work in parks and forests. Botanists also work with medicine, food, and other plant products.**