Plants and Animals

Are you aware of how big a part plants and animals play in your everyday life? From the eggs and toast you have for breakfast to the feather pillow and cotton sheets you sleep on at night, you depend on plants and animals to get you through the day.





1. Plants Here, There, and Everywhere

Play a game in which you try to find as many plant products as you can in your local market. For safety, play this game in teams. Here's how: Using a certain amount of time, each team must find (and write down) as many things that are made with or of plants. The team with the longest list wins.

2. Garden Gifts

Gardeners use different plant parts to propagate (make more) plants. Grow your own greenery from one of the following:

- Seed, such as avocado, orange, or sunflower seed
- Root, such as a sweet potato or ginger root
- Leaf, such as jade plant or African violet (stick the leaf stalk into the soil)
- Stem, such as daffodil bulb or crocus corm (bulbs and corms are two kinds of underground stems.)

3. Creature Teacher

Are you cut out to be an animal trainer? Find out by teaching a dog, a cat, or a bird a trick or a new behavior. Always work with an animal you know is friendly, and ask an adult to help. Figure out how to get the animal to do what you want without making it feel scared or uncomfortable. It might take a while for the animal to catch on, so be very patient. Remember to reward the animal each time it does what you want.

4. Wild Relatives

Animals such as dogs, cats, pigs, and chickens were domesticated (tamed) long ago. How are they different from their wild relatives? Find out by observing the same domesticated animal at least twice to see how it behaves. Next, watch a TV program or video, or read a book or a magazine about one of its wild relatives. Note the things these "cousins" do that are the same and those that are different.



Lynx

5. Creature Clusters

Scientists like to group things according to the characteristics that they have in common. Create your own animal groupings by cutting out 15 to 25 pictures of different animals. Group the animals in at least two ways such as: how they look, what they eat, where they live, how they move, or how they bear their young. Explain your reasons for the groupings.

6. Veggie Voyagers

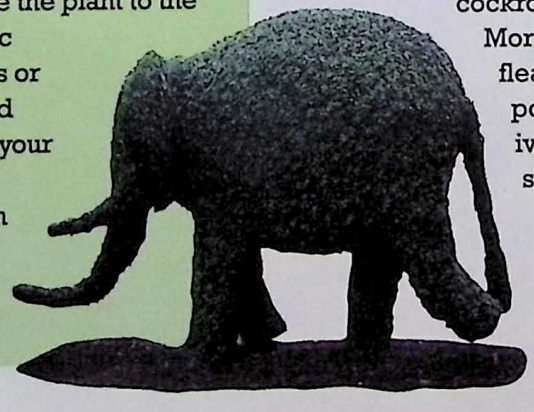
Pick one fruit and one vegetable grown in another country that you have never tasted. Prepare a dish with each one for your friends, family, or troop. Get recipes and cooking tips by consulting a cookbook, a magazine, the Web, a relative, or a friend.

7. Seed Art

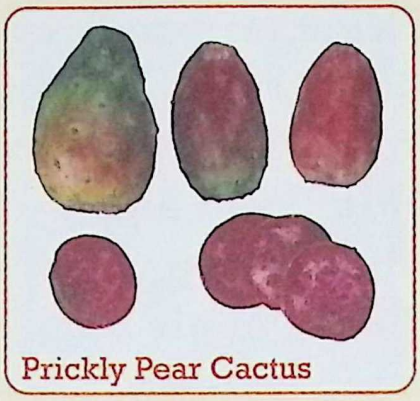
People around the world use seeds to make decorative items, such as jewelry and mosaics. Use at least two kinds of seeds that people eat to make your own work of art.

8. Living Sculpture

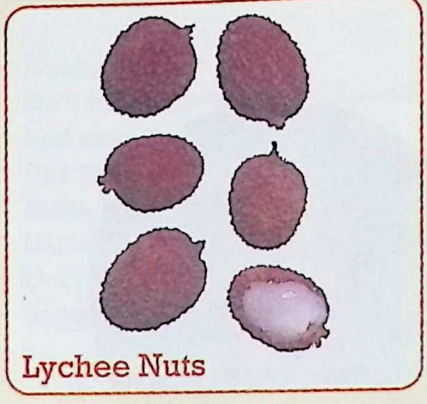
Imagine being able to make sculptures that are alive! Gardeners do just that when they train and trim plants into shapes such as baskets, balls, hearts, or even giraffes! This is called *topiary*. Create your own plant sculpture by using bushy, trailing, or flowering plants. Try using thick wire, metal clothes hangers, wooden sticks, or plastic strawberry containers to create your topiary frame. Tie the plant to the frame with plastic covered twist ties or string. Use a hand pruner to shape your plant, but ask an adult to help with this.



Some FRUITS to try...



Prickly Pear Cactus

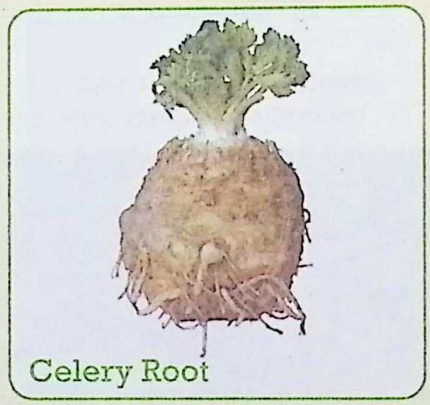


Lychee Nuts

Some VEGGIES to try...



Tomatillos



Celery Root

9. What a Pest!

Some plants and animals are considered pests because they damage crops, cause diseases, and harm other plants and animals. Learn about one plant and one animal that are considered pests in your community. Find out why they are considered harmful and how they are being controlled. Here are some examples of pests you might investigate: deer tick, rat, cockroach, Mormon cricket, flea, kudzu, poison oak or ivy, and leafy spurge.

10. Go on Safari

At a zoo or using your favorite animal books, go on a "world wildlife safari." Find the name of animals that:

- Have a thick fur coat for a cold climate
- Have long fingers for grasping branches
- Have bright colors for attracting a mate
- Have long legs for wading
- Have a dark color for living in shadows
- Have a tongue that reaches in hard-to-get places
- Have big ears that help to cool their blood in hot climates