

Prickly Cactuses

Issue 08, 2022 **Founded by Betty Debnam**

Next Week: Newspapers in Education Week

A saguaro (suh-WAHR-oh) is a treelike type of cactus with white flowers that bloom in the spring and red fruit in the summer. Saguaros are native to the Sonoran Desert in the southwestern United

States and Northern Mexico. They can grow up to 40 feet tall, and they can have up to 25 "arms."



Given the right conditions, a saguaro can live to be 200 years old, but they grow very slowly. A 10-year-old saguaro might be just 1.5 inches tall. A grown saguaro cactus can absorb and store up to 200 gallons of water during a heavy rain!

Saguaros are the largest cactus species in the U.S. A fully grown saguaro cactus can weigh more than 2,000 pounds.

People sometimes boil saguaro pulp to make syrup used for jams and jellies. The seeds from the fruit of the saguaro can be dried and ground into flour.

To Native Americans, the saguaro is a symbol of standing tall, providing nourishment and shelter to others, and being able to adapt to surroundings.

Saguaro cactus

look at the world of cactuses. Cactuses

Cactuses, sometimes called cacti, are a flowering plant family native to North and South America. Mexico has the most variety of cactuses, where the plants have adapted to its **arid**, or dry, climate.

With spiny outsides and great abilities to

store water and **thrive**, or do well, in hot, dry

climates, the cactus has more to it than meets

the eye. This week, The Mini Page takes a

In most species of cactus, the leaves are

often modified to spines, or the needlelike points sticking out of the plants. The spines make it simpler



for cactuses to store the water.

The root system of a cactus is often shallow and thin, so not much water is absorbed. However, what moisture a cactus does collect is stored within storage cells inside the stem. The stem also controls the photosynthetic duties, which is how plants use sunlight to get nutrients from carbon dioxide and water.

The ability of the cactus to store water

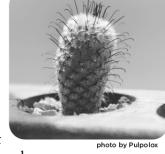
is crucial to its survival in climates where moisture, like rain, isn't readily available.

Succulents

Cactuses are considered succulents, which means they have thick and fleshy stems that are made for storing water. Succulents are xerophytes (ZEER-a-fites), which is a big word

that means they need very little water to survive.

Succulents need between 10 and 14 hours of sunlight per day. The light a cactus absorbs is used to help the plant produce energy and food.



Mini Fact:

There are

are about

types of

cactuses in

the world.

2,000

Cactus wren

Some animals in the desert depend on cactuses and their ability to adapt for their survival. The **prickly pear cactus** is a source of food for animals and insects.

The cactus wren is a type of bird that makes its nest in cactuses because of the

protection they provide with their spines. Cactus wrens build their nests 3 to 10 feet above the ground on cactuses as another way to avoid predators.



Resources

- On the Web: • bit.ly/MPCactus
- kids.kiddle.co/Cactus

At the library:

"Cactus Hotel" by Brenda Z. Guiberson

happy cactus say to the grumpy

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of cactuses are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

CACTUS, DESERT, FLOWERS, FOOD, FRUIT, NEST, PRICKLY, PULP, ROOTS, SAGUARO, SEEDS, SPINES, STEM, STORAGE, SUNLIGHT, THRIVE, WATER, WREN.

VLZPLUPDRE RYORAUGAS ELZSUNLIGHTXMC WKSPINESTNKEA CKRLTKRP RFHS EROB S Т VYDTI URF Т SENOZ DOOFZVS TORAGE

• 2 sticks butter.

• 1/2 teaspoon red

softened

pepper

Callie: What did the

Mini Jokes

Cameron: "Don't be so prickly!"

New research says the movement of ocean

water within a tsunami generates its own magnetic field ahead of the big changes in sea level, which could possibly lead to better warnings of the hazardous waves. Using magnetic and sea level change data from tsunamis that hit Samoa in 2009 and Chile in 2010, the study authors found that the tsunamigenerated magnetic fields are so clearly evident that a wave height of only a few centimeters can be detected.

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For later:

help with th

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need

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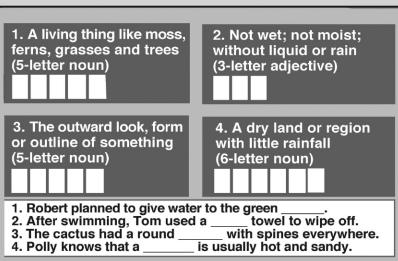
Cook's Corner **Cheese Tea Biscuits**

You'll need:

- 2 cups sharp cheddar cheese, grated
- 2 cups flour
- 2 cups rice cereal

What to do:

- 1. Mix all ingredients in a bowl. 2. Make into a roll about 2 to 3 inches thick.
- 3. Cover with plastic or aluminum wrap.
- 4. Place roll in refrigerator until it becomes hard and easier to handle. 5. Slice into thin tea biscuits and place on an ungreased cookie sheet.
- 6. Bake in a preheated 350-degree oven for about 10 minutes.
- Do not cook until brown or they will be overdone. Makes about 36.



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