

DK READERS

READING
3
ALONE

PLANTS

BITE BACK!



RICHARD PLATT

Plant power

Plants cover the surface of the earth. Without them, we could not survive. One of their most important jobs is to provide food for animals and people.

But not all plants can be munched for lunch. Some make bitter poisons to keep animals from eating them.



There are no flies on this plant – it's eaten them all! See how the Venus flytrap catches insects on pages 6–9.



Beware of the giant Saguaro cactus on page 38 – it's covered in thousands of sharp spines.

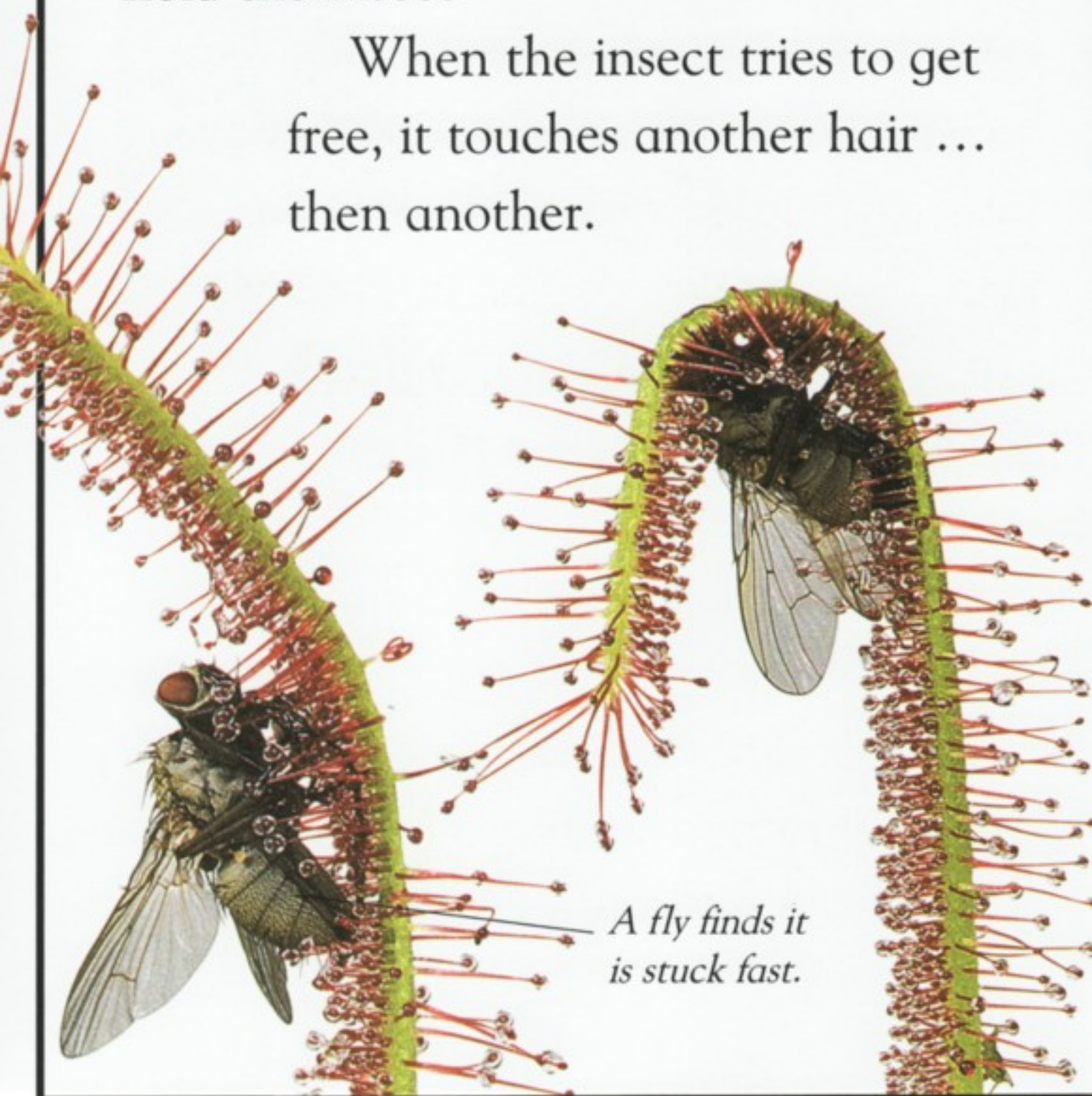


Find out why this tree is called the candelabra tree on page 42.



Every leaf of the sundew plant is covered in fine hairs. Every hair has a blob of sticky gunk at the tip. When an insect lands on a sundew's leaf, just one touch of one hair is enough to catch and hold the insect.

When the insect tries to get free, it touches another hair ... then another.



*A fly finds it
is stuck fast.*

Like the monkshood, the bright red seeds of the prayer bean plant look harmless. People in India used the seeds to make necklaces and rosaries.



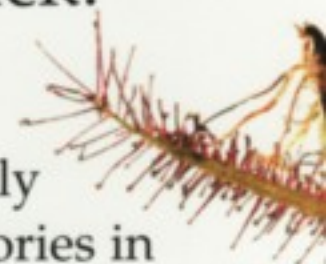
But wearing a prayer bean necklace is a bad idea. Each little seed contains enough poison to kill a grown-up. If the tough outer casing of the seed is broken or cracked, the poison inside escapes. It can enter the body through a scratch or cut.

Weighing them up

Because prayer bean seeds are all nearly exactly the same weight and size, they were once used as weights to weigh gold and diamonds.



There are plants that prickle, sting, or even munch insects for lunch! So, never bite a strange plant—it might bite back!



DK READERS

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