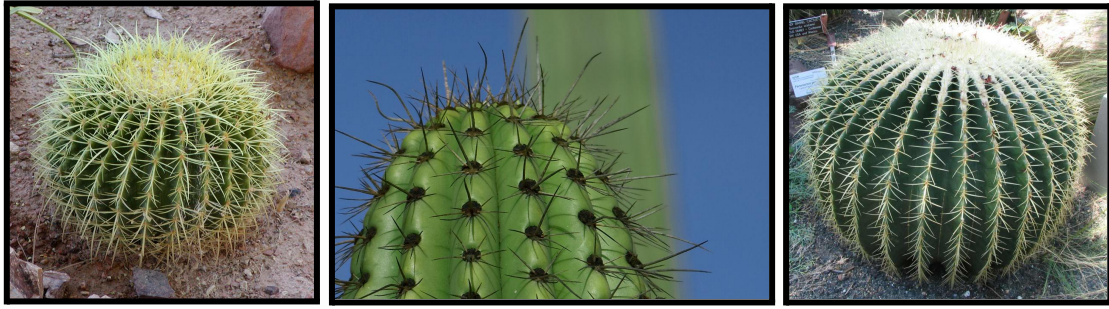




Cacti are those plants with sharp spikes on them that live in dry places.

When I was little, I kept cactus plants. I liked their weird shapes and spines, and found they were very easy to grow. I'm not very good at remembering to water pot plants, but my cacti didn't seem to mind if I forgot occasionally.

Like all plants, cacti need water. But cacti belong to a special group of plants (called "succulents") that are able to do without water for longer than most. This is because succulents are able to store water.

Cacti store water in their stems. Other succulents, store water in their leaves. Succulents live in many places where there isn't much water. For example, they grow high in the mountains where water often freezes. The most famous succulents, the cacti, usually grow in deserts where it is very hot and dry during the day, and cold at night.

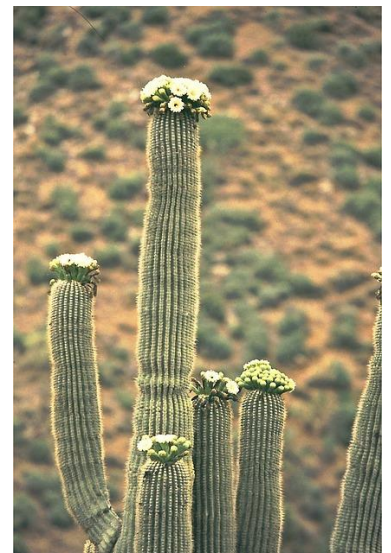
Cacti must protect themselves from the hot sun. When the sun is overhead, it could easily damage the delicate growing point at the top of the plant. So most cacti have lots of spines at the top which give shade like an umbrella.

The spines on the cactus are also there for another reason.

Because succulents can store water, they are very juicy. Most plant-eating animals would eat a juicy cactus if they could, especially if they are living in the desert, and are thirsty. The spines keep them away.

However, some birds and insects do manage to bore holes in cacti and live inside. This is a good place for them to live, because the spines around the entrance of the hole protect them from their enemies.

Source: School Journal, Part 2, No. 3, Learning Media Limited, 1993.



TASK:

This task is about reading to recall information. Answer the following questions by highlighting what answer you think is correct.

a The writer grew cacti plants because she liked

- (A) their colours and prickles.
- (B) their leaves and pots.
- (C) the fact they were easy to buy.
- (D) their weird shapes and spines.

b The thing that is special about the plants called "succulents" is that they

- (A) can do without water longer than other plants.
- (B) can be eaten.
- (C) are green all year.
- (D) can hold water in their prickles.

c Cacti store water in their

- (A) leaves.
- (B) needles.
- (C) roots.
- (D) stems.

d Succulents grow where there isn't much water. They grow in high mountains because

- (A) there is little rain.
- (B) the water flows down the mountain.
- (C) the water freezes.
- (D) the wind dries the rain.

e What do cacti use most often to protect themselves from the sun?

- (A) Spines
- (B) Leaves
- (C) Nearby rocks
- (D) Passing clouds

f Why do birds and insects bore holes into cacti?

- (A) For water
 - (B) To eat the spines
 - (C) To use them as homes
 - (D) To protect the cactus
-

Cacti Fact Poster

Use Google Drawing to create a poster that shares lots of facts about cacti plants.

You might want to include:

- Where to find cacti plants.
- How they survive in deserts.
- Why they have spikes.

Share your poster on your blog!