



The power of plants!

Get ready for a plant-tastic adventure as we meet the world's biggest tree, find out which plants grow the fastest and learn all about the amazing abilities of bamboo!

Spring is the time of year when nature comes back to life. The sun shines brighter, the days grow longer, animals wake from hibernation, and flowers start to bloom.

Did you know that it is only thanks to plants that we call this season spring at all? Before the 15th century, people referred to this time of the year as "springing time" or "the spring of the year" because it was when plants literally sprang out of the ground. "Springing time" was shortened first to "springtime" and then, during the 16th century, to simply "spring," as we still call it today.

So, to celebrate the return of "springing time," we've gathered some amazing facts about all things green and growing. Join us for an audience with General Sherman, the world's biggest tree, and explore how flowers and other plants grow, and how they help to keep the world bursting with new life each year.

Meet the biggest tree on Earth!

Gaze up at the majestic giant sequoia tree pictured above. You are looking at General Sherman, thought to be the largest individual tree (by both size and weight) in the world.

Found in Sequoia National Park in California,



General Sherman stands a towering 275 feet tall (which is only 30 feet shorter than the Statue of Liberty in New York!) and is estimated to weigh over 2,000 tons. How heavy is that? Well, to compare: that means General Sherman weighs more than 45 school buses! Just the tree's bark alone weighs about 53 tons, and its branches have to support a staggering 1.85 tons of leaves. It took General Sherman,

which is named after a Civil War general who likely never visited it, a very long time to grow this big. The massive tree is thought to be between 2,300 and 2,700 years old. This means that General Sherman sprouted from the ground before computers, before cars — before even the start of the Roman Empire!



Giant sequoia trees are so huge you can drive a car through them.



Child 2.5"



English oak 9"



Silver birch 16"



Scots pine 20"



Spruce 30"



Bamboo 36" a DAY!

Which plant grows the fastest?

Green plants grow thanks to an amazing process called photosynthesis, which enables them to use sunlight to make their own food. Photosynthesis is essential for life on Earth because, without it, there would be no green plants. And without green plants, there would be no animals, since almost all living things depend on the nutrients in green plants for our food and the oxygen they make to breathe.

Photosynthesis starts when chlorophyll, a substance found in all green plants, absorbs energy from sunlight. Plants use this energy to change water and carbon dioxide into oxygen, which is released into the air, and nutrients. All green plants use photosynthesis to grow. But some plants grow much faster than others!

The graphic below compares the average growth per year, in inches, of five plants with the average growth of a human child.

7 amazing facts about bamboo!

Many types of bamboo look like trees, but they are actually tall grasses. There are hundreds of different species that grow in many parts of the world.

A bamboo's stem is called a culm. In the larger species, a bamboo's culm can grow to be more than 100 feet tall!

As you can see from the graphic on the left, bamboo is the world's fastest-growing land plant (sea kelp in the ocean can grow quicker). In fact, some species of bamboo grow so fast that if you sit down to watch it for a few hours, you'll be able to see the bamboo growing right in front of your eyes!

Light and strong, bamboo is often used in construction and to make furniture. Some bamboo is stronger than steel.

Bamboo rarely flowers — sometimes as little as once every 130 years. But when it does, every bamboo plant of that same species flowers at the same time all around the world!

Bamboo can cool the air around it by up to 8 degrees Fahrenheit!

A giant panda can eat as much as 50 lbs of bamboo in a single day! Bamboo makes up 99 percent of a giant panda's diet, with meat and other plants providing the other 1 percent.



PUZZLES & JOKES

Stumped? Don't worry, you can find the solutions to all the puzzles at: whatonearthmag.com/answers

FRUIT WORD SEARCH

Can you spot the names of the 12 fruits hidden in our word search puzzle? Good luck!

Y O E E K
 D R K D I L I M E
 R R L D R T B W B V Y
 D E A H B Q D D I C Y W V
 H E E E L P P A E N I P I
 C E T E E Y W B Z Z Q B M O E
 Z S U H A A J H P L U M Z C L
 P E A C H Y J V K J W V R Y P
 O K H Y G E G M R A O W X L P
 C K X L W S Q R X R V W C M A
 Q N Q Q N I V A W S S G E
 N U O H S I N F P H B Z U
 M V L Z G R L Z E M G
 J C E I F I G O B
 Y M X U W

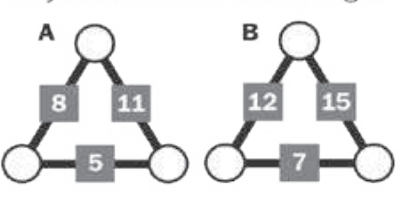
- APPLE
- GRAPE
- LYCHEE
- PEACH
- CHERRY
- KIWI
- MELON
- PINEAPPLE
- FIG
- LIME
- ORANGE
- PLUM

NUMBER TRIANGLES

In the triangles below, the numbers inside the squares are the sum of the two numbers in the connected circles. For example:



Can you figure out which number should appear in each of the circles? All the numbers in the circles are between 1 and 10, and a number can only be used once in each triangle.



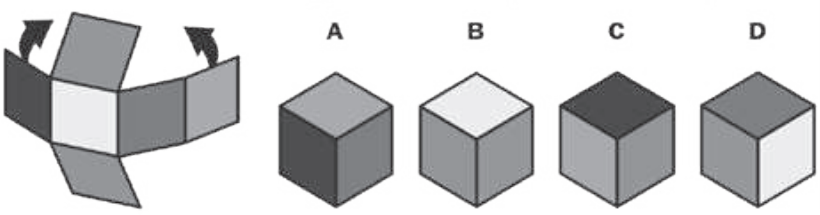
SUDOKU

Fill all the empty squares so that every row, column and 3x2 box contains each of the numbers 1 to 6.

4			6		
		5		3	1
1	6				5
5	3	1	2		4
			6	5	

CUBE IT!

The six-sided shape on the left can be folded to form a cube. Only two of the cubes on the right can be made by it. Which are they?



Which reptile tells the funniest jokes?

A stand-up chameleon!

What did the blanket say to the bed?

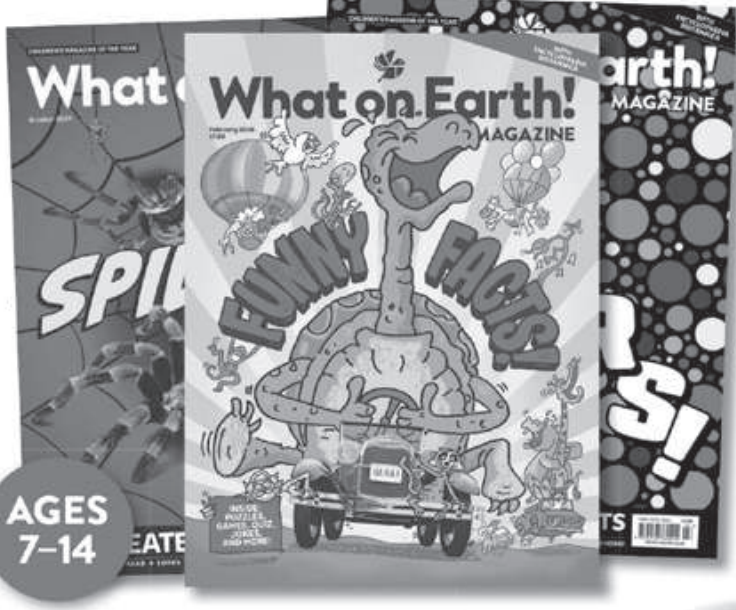
I've got you covered!

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