



Plants of the Redwood Forest

by Joanne Mattern

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN

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BOSTON

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A Wet and Wonderful World

Welcome to the redwood forest! Look around you. It is hard to miss the giant, towering redwood trees. However, the forest is thick and **dense** with many other trees and plants, too. You will be amazed at the number of different types of plants that grow in such a small area.



 A redwood forest is home to a huge variety of plants.

Redwood forests are found in only a few places in North America, such as Northern California.


Redwood forests are very wet. In the winter, the forests get moisture from the rain. During the summer, it does not rain very much. However, the trees and plants collect moisture from the fog.




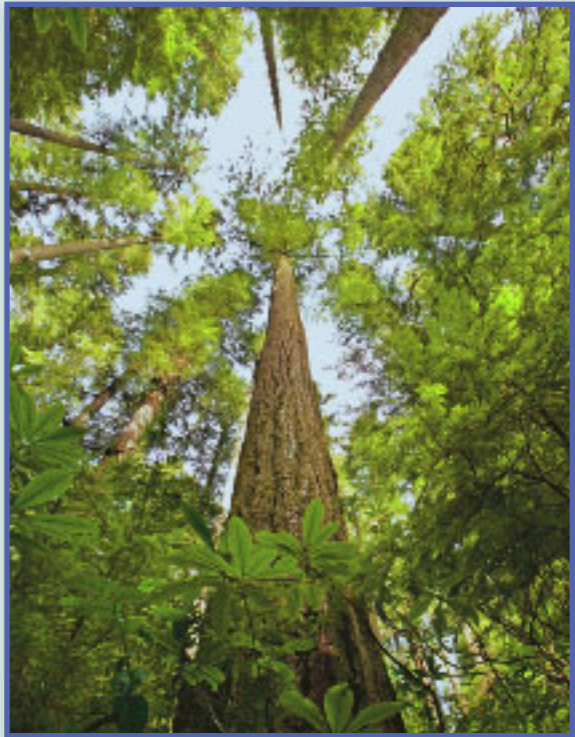
There are several redwood forests in California. Many of them are preserved in national parks.

The Douglas Fir

The coast redwood may be the biggest tree in the forest, but it is not the only one. The Douglas fir is another large tree that lives in the redwood forest.

 The Douglas fir is a type of tree called a conifer (KAHN-uh-fur). Conifers have seeds that grow inside cones. Many conifers also have needles instead of leaves that stay green all year.

 The Douglas fir is the second tallest tree in a redwood forest.



•• Drink Up! ••

How about a cup of Douglas fir tea? Young needles from this tree can be boiled into a tea. The tea is very healthy and full of vitamin C. The roots of this tree also can be made into baskets.




🔊 Douglas firs provide important resources to animals and people. Birds and small animals eat the tree's seeds. Bears scrape off the bark to eat the sweet sap inside the tree.


People use the wood from Douglas firs for lumber to build houses. Douglas firs also make popular holiday trees!

The Mighty Oak

The California black oak is often found in the redwood forest. The crown, or top, of these oak trees is very large. Crowns provide shade and shelter for redwood seedlings that grow underneath them.

 Groups of black oaks can be very crowded and dense. Usually, all the black oak trees in an area are the same age.



 The California black oak is the most common oak found on the West Coast.

Every spring, buds appear on the oak tree. Each bud will open and a flower will appear. In time, the flowers will produce seeds.

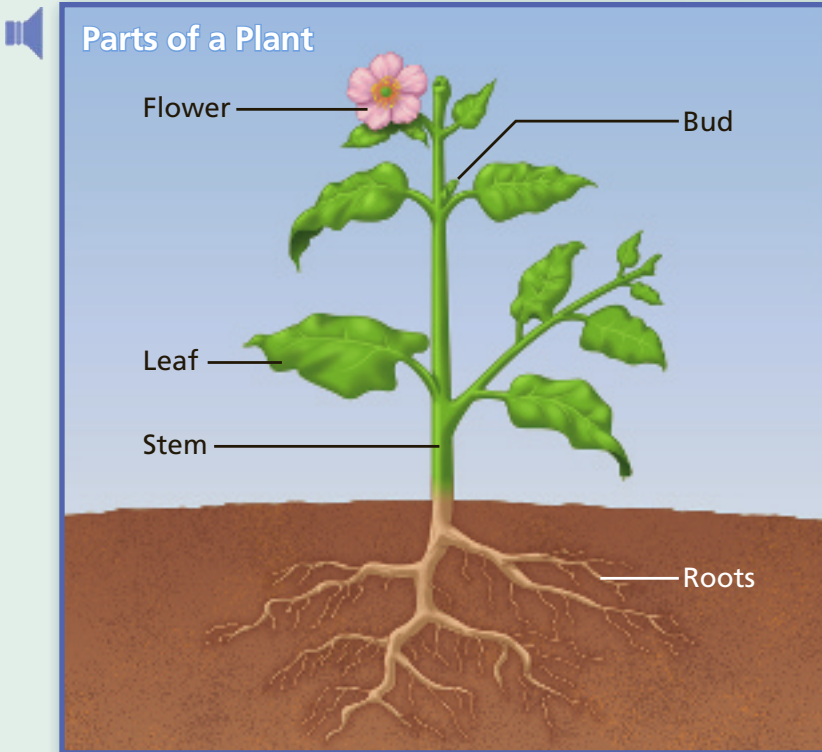
An oak tree's seeds are called acorns. It takes about two years for an acorn to develop on an oak tree. A tree has to be at least 30 years old before it will produce acorns.


In time, the acorns fall to the ground. Many forest animals like to eat them, especially squirrels, who will often bury them. If they forget to dig them up, the acorns will grow into new trees.



Berry Patch

Many smaller plants also grow in the redwood forest. You will find beautiful flowering plants like the Douglas iris. You may also find shrubs, or small bushes, that produce gooseberries, blackberries, and huckleberries.



 **The roots take in water and nutrients from the soil. The leaves use sunlight to make food.**



 The huckleberry is a shrub with shiny, flat leaves that stay green all year round.

 Like other shrubs, the huckleberry lives under the redwood trees. Deer, elk, chipmunks, bears, and birds all like to eat this plant.

 Huckleberries are very good to eat. The berries can be eaten fresh or dried. They can be used in jams. Huckleberries also can be made into a healthy tea.

Dangerous Plants

Not all shrubs in the forest are helpful. Some berries are not good to eat and can make you sick. Other plants can hurt your skin. Poison oak may make you very itchy if you touch it. Stinging nettle is a plant with leaves that are covered with rough hairs. These hairs will sting and scratch your skin.



The Western azalea has pretty flowers, but don't eat it! All parts of the plant are poisonous.



Funny Ferns

Ferns are some of the most interesting plants in the redwood forest. These plants do not grow from seeds, and they do not have flowers. Instead, they use spores. Spores grow on the bottom of the leaves. They blow off or are brushed off by animals. If they land in a good spot, they will grow into a fern.

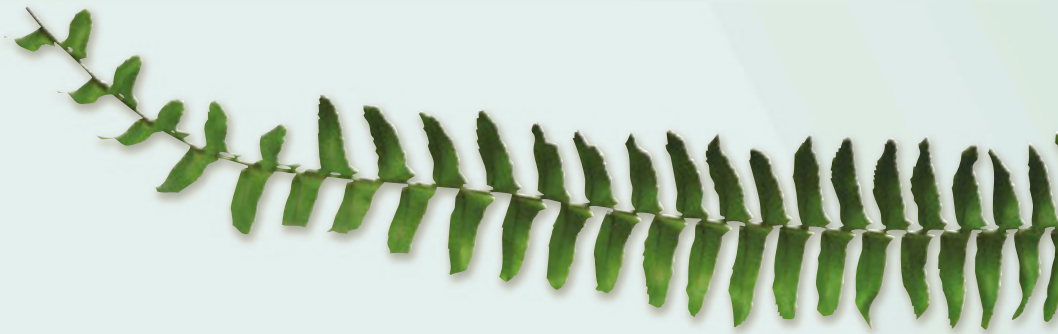


Ferns grow where it is wet. They are common in redwood forests.

🔊 Ferns need a lot of moisture to grow. That's why a redwood forest is the perfect home for them. Some ferns grow on the ground. Others grow on tree branches.


🔊 When a redwood sheds its needles, some of them fall on the lower branches. In time, they build up into a **shallow** layer of soil. A fern's spores may grow in that soil.

Leather ferns are a type of epiphyte (EP-uh-fite) that live in the redwood forest. Epiphytes are not **independent**. They grow on another plant and need the other plant to survive.



An Important Connection

People, animals, and plants are all connected to each other—just look at the redwood forest. Redwoods and oak trees create shelter so other plants can grow. These plants are then eaten by animals and people.

 As you can see, the redwood forest is filled with some incredible plant life besides the redwoods. Each plant has its own special role.



Plants That Grow in a Redwood Forest

TREES	FLOWERS	SHRUBS	FERNS
Coast Redwood	Calypso Orchid	Evergreen Huckleberry	Sword Fern
Douglas Fir	Trillium	Manzanita	Licorice Fern
California Bay	Redwood Violet	California Blackberry	Bracken
Bigleaf Maple	Douglas Iris	Poison Oak	
Hazelnut			
Black Oak			



Responding



TARGET SKILL Text and Graphic Features

What text and graphic features are used in *Plants of the Redwood Forest*? Think about maps, photographs, and charts that help you better understand. Copy and complete the chart below.

Text or Graphic Feature Photo, p. 3	Text or Graphic Feature Map of California, p. 4	Text or Graphic Feature ?
Purpose Shows what plants in a redwood forest look like.	Purpose Shows where redwood forests are located.	Purpose ?



Write About It

Text to Text Write an informational paragraph about a topic in nature that you have read about in another book. Include a strong supporting sentence and important details.



TARGET VOCABULARY

civilized
continent
customs
dense
evaporate

independent
moisture
opportunities
resources
shallow



TARGET SKILL **Text and Graphic Features**

Examine how text and pictures work together.



TARGET STRATEGY **Monitor/Clarify**

Notice what is confusing as you read. Find ways to understand it.



GENRE Informational Text gives facts and examples about a topic.

Level: O

DRA: 38

Genre:

Informational Text

Strategy:

Monitor/Clarify

Skill:

Text and Graphic Features

Word Count: 913

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