

MAIN IDEA/DETAILS ASSESSMENT

Read the article *Fighting In Place*.

MAIN IDEA

1. This article is mostly about
 - a) animals eating plants.
 - b) how plants defend themselves.
 - c) the Western Buttercup.
 - d) how plants use chemicals.
2. The third paragraph is mostly about
 - a) plants use chemicals to protect themselves.
 - b) rashes.
 - c) plants have thorns and spines.
 - d) animals eat plants.

FACTS & DETAILS

3. According to the article, which of these is a way plants fight off enemies.
 - a) their different shaped leaves.
 - b) a strong smell.
 - c) they camouflage into their environment.
 - d) they have thorns and spines.
4. Which of these plants use a bad taste to fight off its enemies?
 - a) Poison ivy
 - b) Western buttercup
 - c) Ocotillo
 - d) Nettle Plant

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Fighting in Place

Plants can't just get up and run away when they are threatened. So what do they do? They defend themselves in amazing ways.

The biggest problem for most plants is that animals like to eat them. So plants have developed special weapons for keeping animals away. Some plants have thorns or spines. For example, the ocotillo plant, pictured at lower right, is a thorny desert shrub that grows in the southwestern United States. Its branches are very spiny, so it doesn't offer an easy meal. In fact, the bush has such a good defense system that early settlers used

ocotillo plants to make fences to keep their livestock penned in.

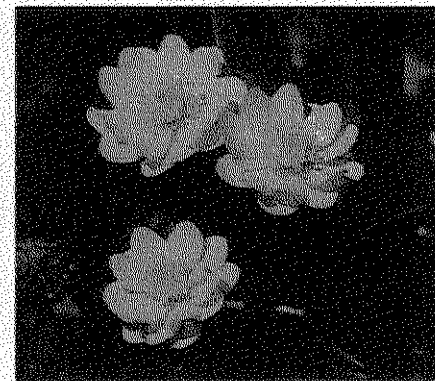
Sometimes plants use chemicals to protect themselves. If you've ever run into poison ivy, you know how this works. The itchy rash on your skin may last for many days—but you'll probably admit it's a good way for the plant to protect itself.

The stings of the nettle plant, pictured at right, also provide an unforgettable experience. When an animal rubs against the nettle, the stinging hairs prick like tiny needles. Then they release chemicals that can cause an unpleasant reaction—and animals learn to stay away.

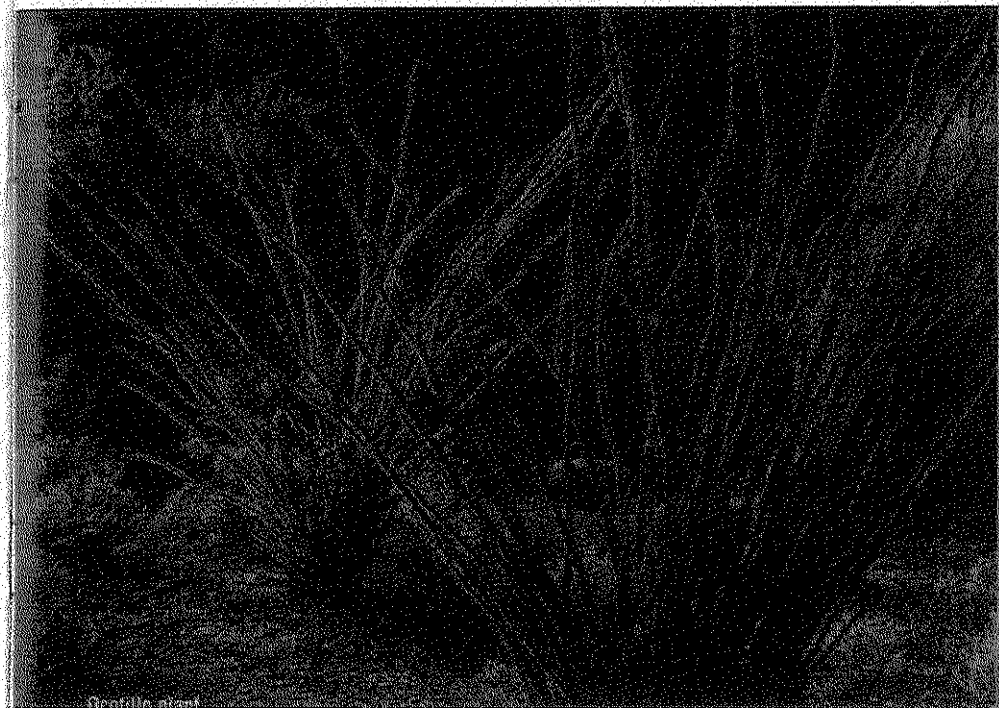
The western buttercup, pictured at far right, is a bright yellow flower that looks pretty and seems harmless. Animals that eat it quickly learn that the flower has a very bad taste. It also contains a weak poison that makes animals sick. They don't often come back to this plant for a second helping.



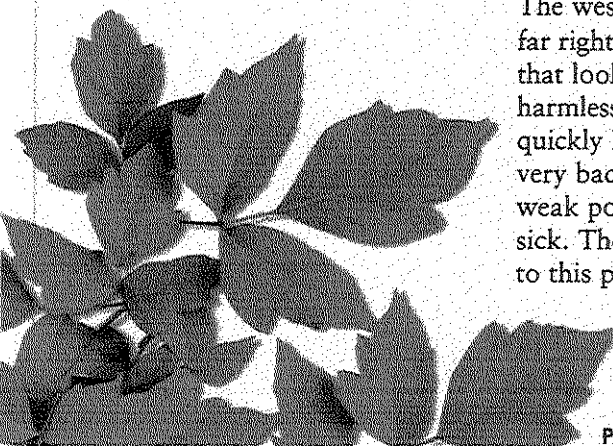
Nettle plant



Western buttercup



Ocotillo plant



Poison ivy