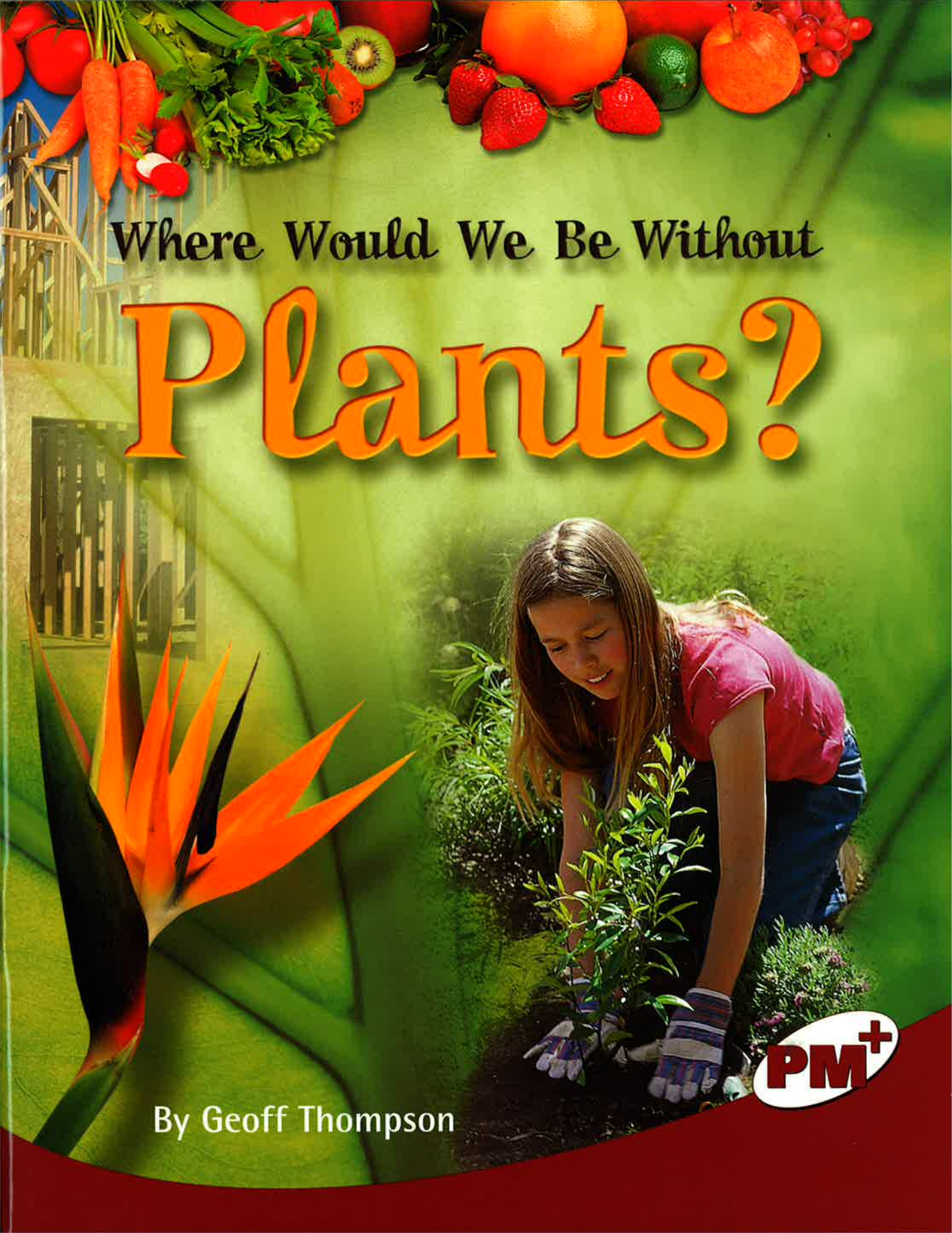

Where Would We Be Without
Plants?
By Geoff Thompson
PM+

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Introduction

Where would we be without food? Where would we be without fresh air? We could not survive without these things. And did you know that without plants, there would be no food or fresh air?

If all the plants we rely on were to disappear, then so too would humans.

Plants also provide us with materials to make clothes and to make our homes comfortable.

Many other things that make life easier and more enjoyable come from plants.

Our future depends on managing our plant resources carefully.



Fresh fruit can be eaten straight from the tree.



Cotton is made into clothes.

Wheat

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Chapter 1

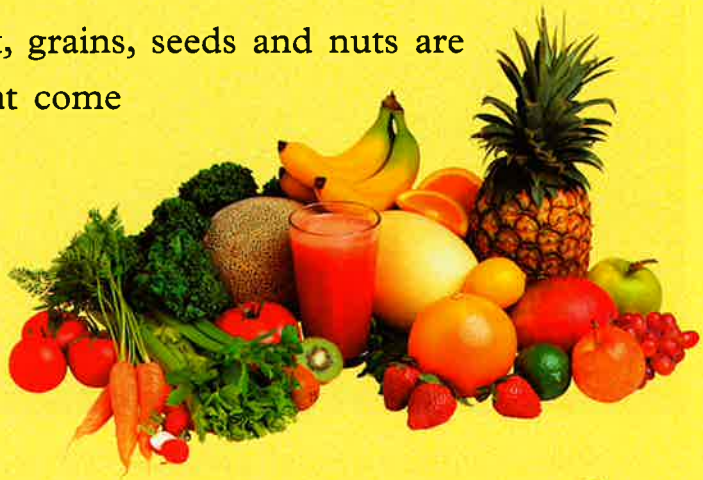
Plants for Food

Where would we be without ... food?

If it weren't for plants, there would be no food of any sort. All the food that humans and other animals eat comes from plants, or from animals that have eaten plants.

Vegetables, fruit, grains, seeds and nuts are some of the foods that come from plants.





We eat some plants fresh — straight from the garden or farm. We cook some plants before eating. Some plants are changed to make them into food. We make sauces, oils, pastes and spreads by crushing, grinding, squeezing and grating plants, and by mixing them with other **ingredients**.



Bread is made from flour, which comes from cereal **crops** such as wheat, corn and barley.



In different countries, people make different sorts of bread. It is the most widely eaten food in the world.

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All plants once grew wild in **native forests** or bushland.

As populations grew and technology developed, people started growing food plants together in the same place, on farms. This made it easier to collect or **harvest** the plants. Plants grown on farms are called crops.



Rice paddies

Some common food crops are: rice, wheat, corn, barley, sugar cane and many kinds of fruit and vegetables.

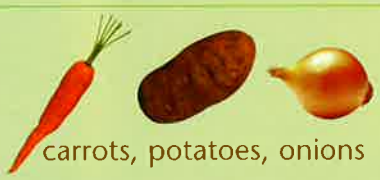


Tomato plants

Some plants are grown in green houses.

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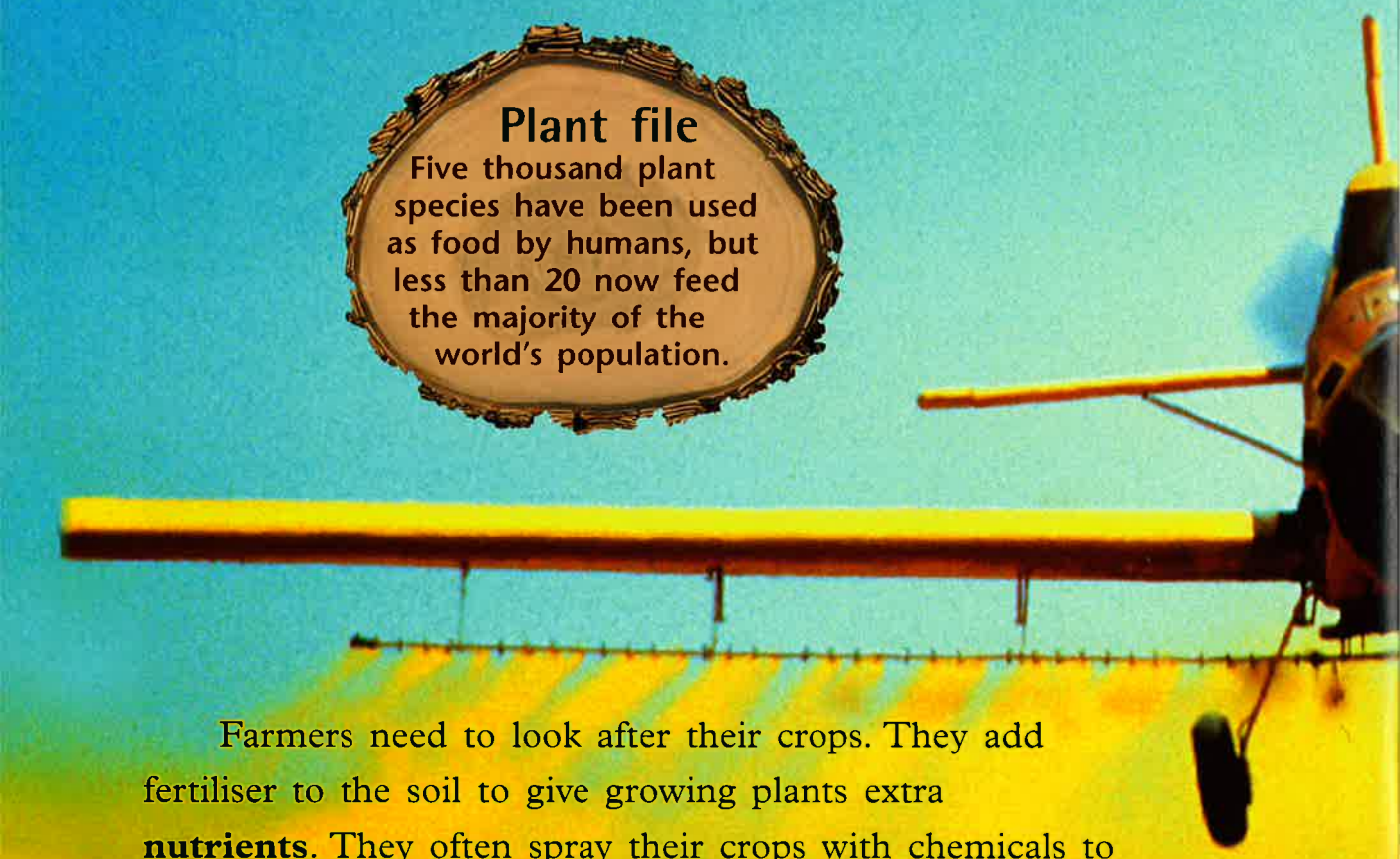
Plants provide us with many types of food. Food can come from different parts of plants.

Part of plant	Food that comes from this part of the plant
seeds	 bread, vegetable oil, cornflakes, peanuts
roots	 carrots, potatoes, onions
flowers	 broccoli, cauliflower
fruits	 tomatoes, oranges, apples, olive oil
leaves	 spinach, lettuce, cabbage
stems	 rhubarb, asparagus, celery
sap	 sugar, maple syrup

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Like us, plants need food and water to survive. They get their food and water from the soil.

Food crops are planted on farms where there is good soil, enough rainfall or other water supply and a climate that is right for that crop.



Plant file

Five thousand plant species have been used as food by humans, but less than 20 now feed the majority of the world's population.

Farmers need to look after their crops. They add fertiliser to the soil to give growing plants extra **nutrients**. They often spray their crops with chemicals to kill weeds and insects that slow the plants' growth. They do this to help keep the plants healthy. But they must be careful not to let too many chemicals escape into the environment.