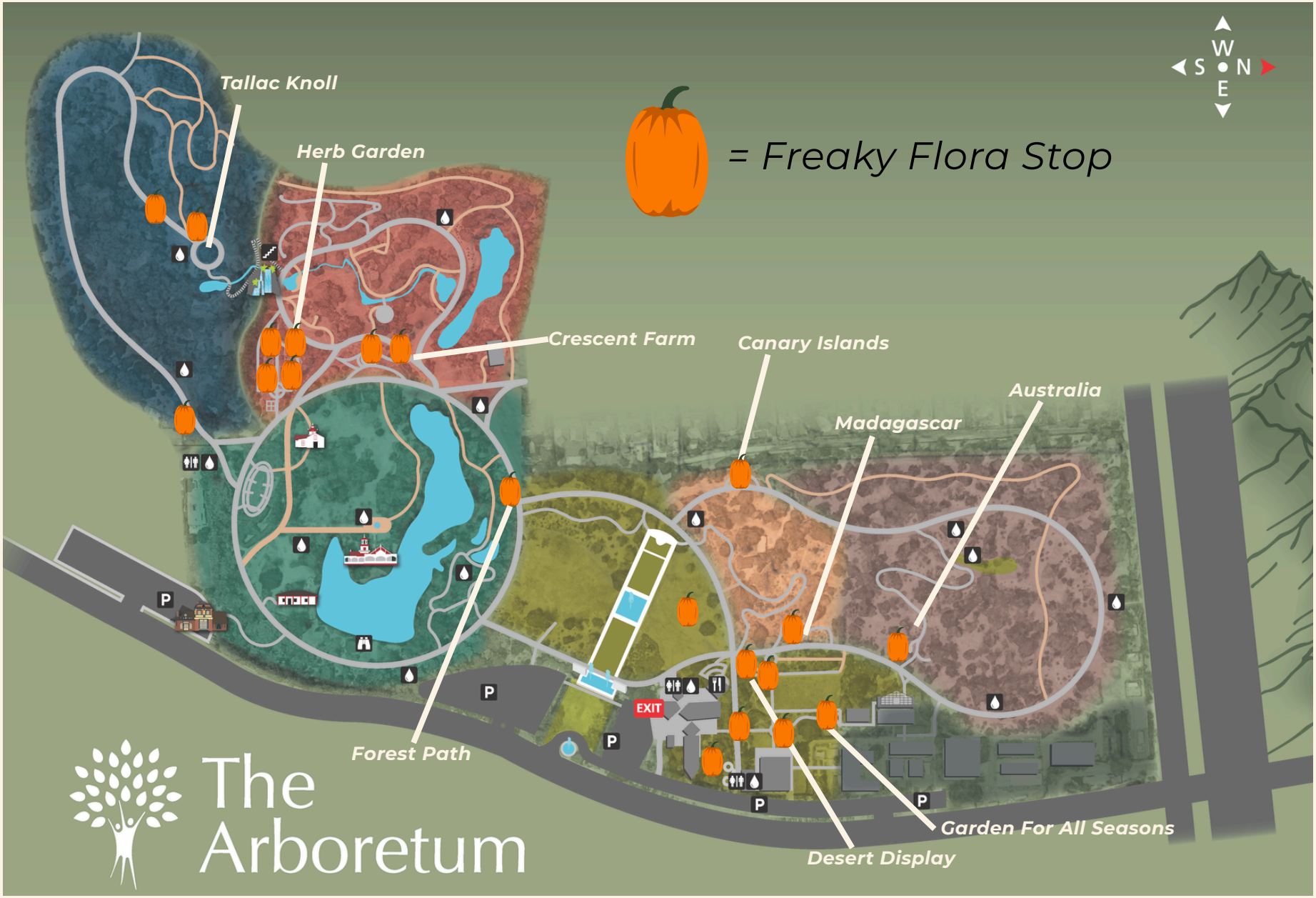
FREAKY FLORA

Can you find all 20 Freaky Flora stops in the garden?



ANGEL'S TRUMPET

FREAKY FLORA

Renowned for its potent psychoactive properties, Angel's Trumpet was traditionally used by shamans to cross into spirit realms and commune with ancestors. Its downward-hanging blooms mirror tarot symbolism: cosmic horns aimed toward the earth to awaken the dead.

- **Common Name:** Angel's Trumpet
- **Scientific Name:** *Brugmansia spp*.
- **Height:** 10–36 feet, depending on species
- **Region:** Native to tropical regions of South America; now extinct in the wild.
- **Habitat:** Tropical and subtropical environments; commonly grown today in gardens with rich, moist, well-drained soil
- **Cultural Significance:** Long history of ceremonial and spiritual use among Indigenous peoples of South America, including traditions involving healing, divination, and altered states of consciousness
- **Traditional Medicinal Use:** Historically used in some traditional medicine practices for ailments such as pain, inflammation, and respiratory conditions. Because all parts of the plant contain highly toxic tropane alkaloids, it is not considered safe for self-treatment
- **Toxicity:** All parts contain potent compounds such as scopolamine, atropine, and hyoscyamine; ingestion can cause severe poisoning and can be fatal.

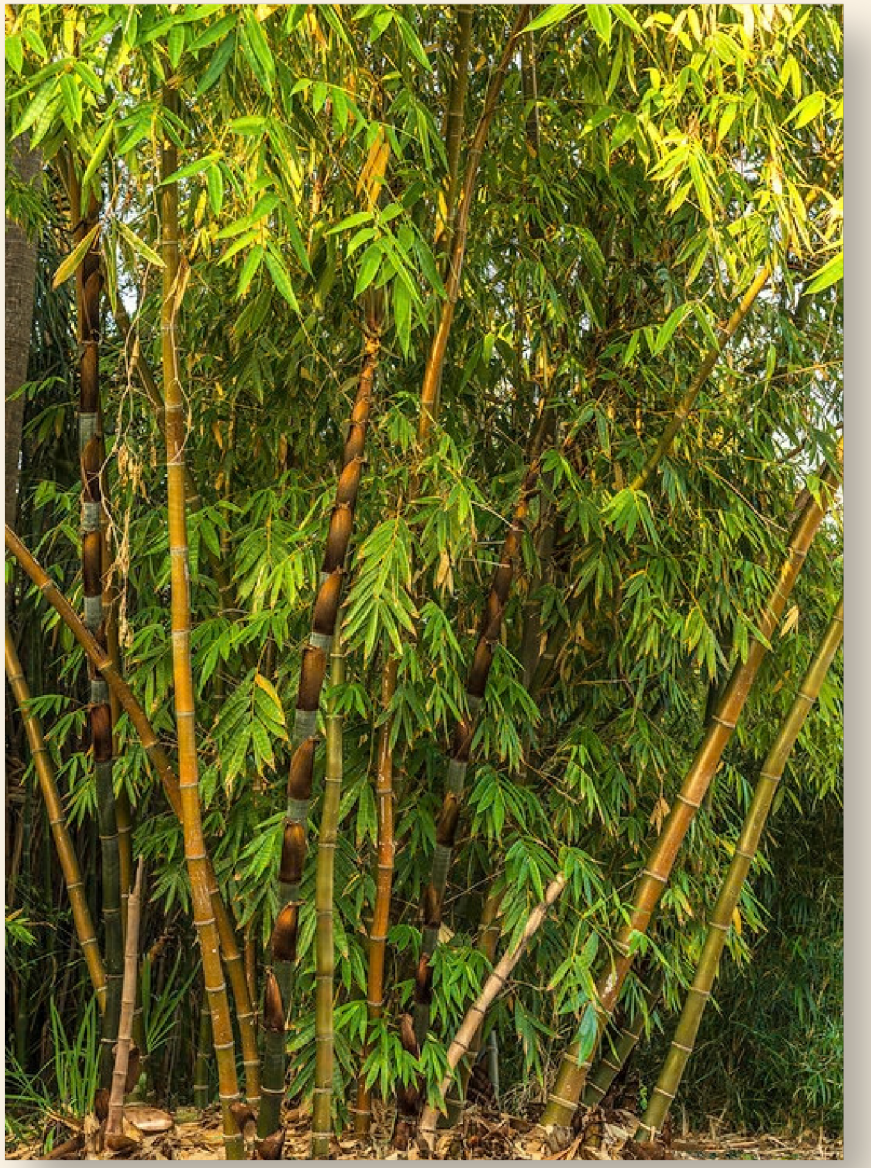


BAMBOO

FREAKY FLORA

In rural Bangladesh, dense bamboo groves are feared after dark as the domain of the Besho Bhoot—bamboo-dwelling ghosts. Local folklore warns never to step over a stalk leaning across a path; unseen spirits will snap the bamboo upright, crushing or throwing anyone caught in its path...or worse. Even on windless nights, visitors report terrifying, localized gusts whipping through the bamboo stalks while the surrounding air stays deathly still.

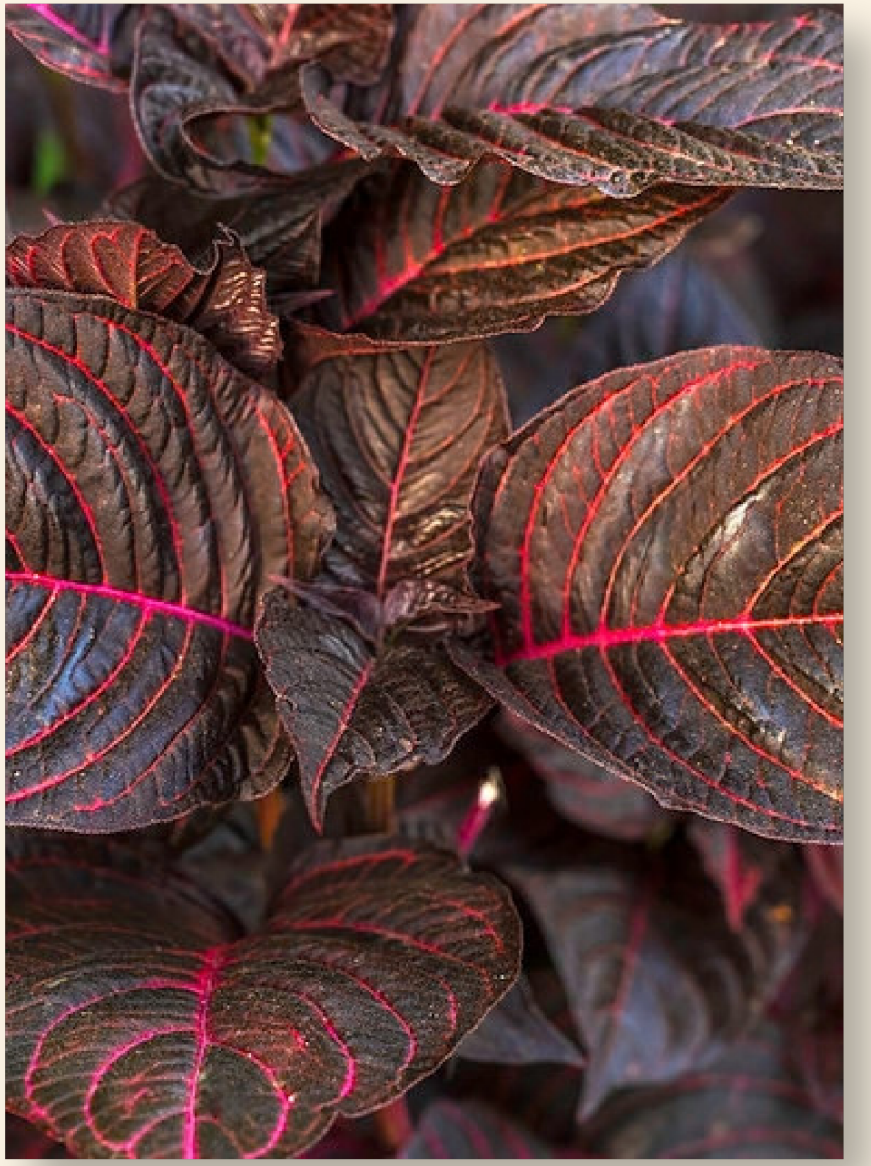
- **Common Name:** Bamboo
- **Scientific Name:** *Bambusoideae* subfamily, including more than 1,400 species
- **Height:** Varies dramatically by species, from small groundcovers to giant bamboos over 100 feet tall
- **Region:** Native species occur throughout Asia, Africa, the Americas, and parts of Australia
- **Habitat:** Tropical, subtropical, and temperate forests and grasslands; growing conditions vary widely by species
- **Key Features:** Bamboo is actually a grass, not a tree. Its woody stems, called culms, grow from underground rhizomes and are divided into distinctive segments called nodes
- **Ecological Role:** Dense rhizome systems can stabilize soil and reduce erosion, while bamboo forests provide food and habitat for numerous animals, including giant pandas
- **Notable Adaptation:** Some bamboo species are among the fastest-growing plants on Earth, with documented growth approaching 3 feet in a single day under ideal conditions
- **Cultural Significance:** Bamboo has been used for thousands of years for construction, tools, food, paper, furniture, baskets, weapons, and musical instruments. In several Asian traditions it symbolizes strength, flexibility, resilience, and longevity



BLOODLEAF PLANT

FREAKY FLORA

Named for its striking crimson leaves and vein-like stems, this plant looks like a living heart. Its fleshy, deep-red foliage has earned it a colorful lineup of gruesome nicknames over the years, including the "Beefsteak Plant" and "Chicken Gizzard Plant."



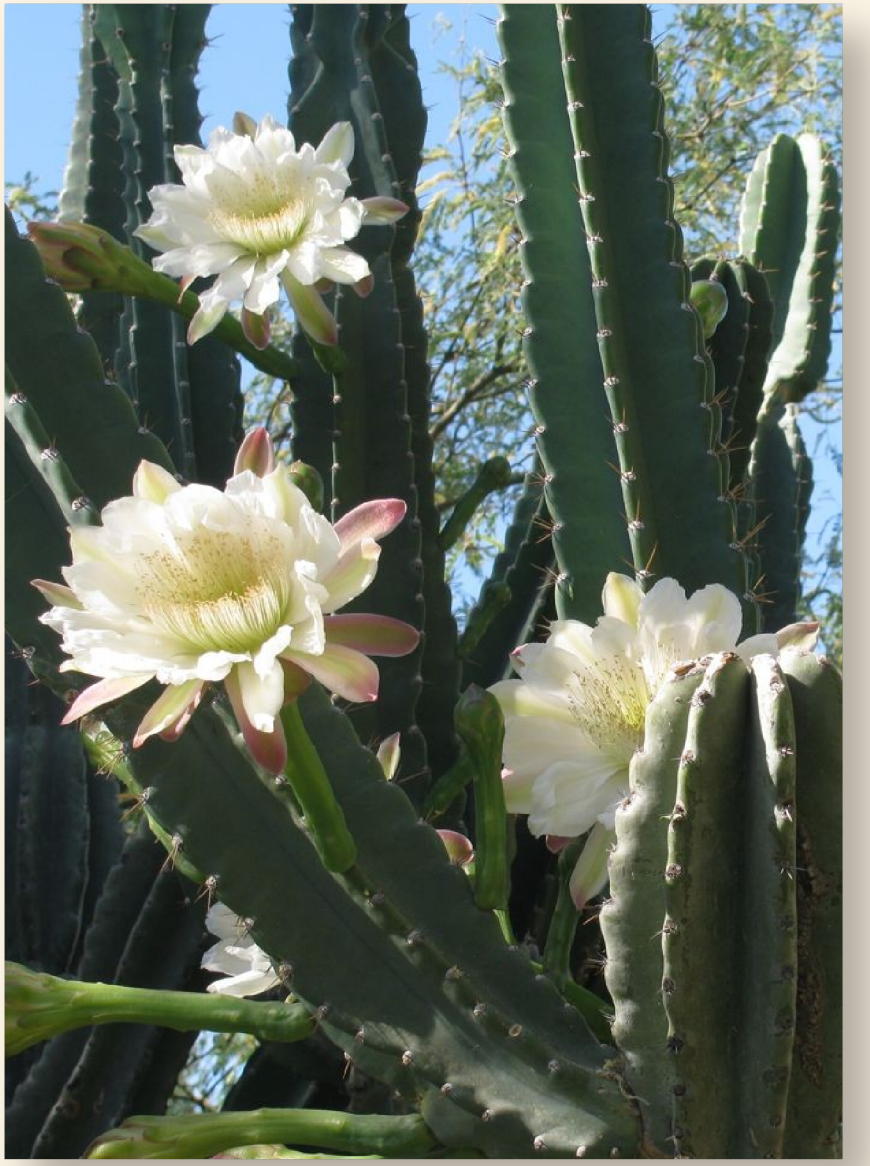
- **Common Name:** Bloodleaf/ Beefsteak Plant
- **Scientific Name:** *Iresine herbstii*
- **Height:** 1-3 feet tall
- **Region:** Native to tropical South America
- **Habitat:** Warm, humid tropical environments; commonly cultivated as a houseplant, container plant, or colorful garden ornamental
- **Key Features:** Broad, oval leaves in dramatic shades of blood-red, burgundy, magenta, and pink, often marked with bright contrasting veins; small flowers are relatively inconspicuous
- **Cultural & Ornamental Use:** Popular for its intense coloration and sometimes called the beefsteak plant or chicken gizzard plant because of the fleshy, deep-red appearance of its leaves
- **Notable Adaptation:** The dramatic red coloration comes from pigments called betalains, compounds characteristic of many members of the amaranth family. Brighter light generally encourages more intense coloration

CACTI

FREAKY FLORA

Instead of bees, birds, or butterflies, most cacti rely on bats for pollination. When these night-blooming plants open after dark, they release a potent, sweet fragrance that guides bats straight to the source. Using their specialized long noses and tongues, the bats reach deep inside the tubular flowers to feed on the nectar, accidentally brushing against pollen and carrying it from plant to plant in the dark.

- **Common Name:** Cereus Cactus/Night-Blooming Cactus
- **Scientific Name:** *Cereus* spp.
- **Height:** 10-40 feet
- **Region:** Native primarily to South America, with species occurring in Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru, and nearby regions
- **Habitat:** Dry forests, rocky slopes, scrublands, and other arid to seasonally dry environments
- **Key Features:** Tall, upright, ribbed stems give these cacti a dramatic candelabra-like appearance. Many species produce large white, funnel-shaped flowers followed by fleshy red or yellow fruits
- **Ecological Role:** Night-blooming flowers provide nectar for nocturnal pollinators, particularly bats and moths, while fruits provide food for birds and other wildlife
- **Notable Adaptation:** Many Cereus flowers open after dark. Their large size, pale coloration, strong fragrance, and abundant nectar make them easier for nocturnal pollinators to locate

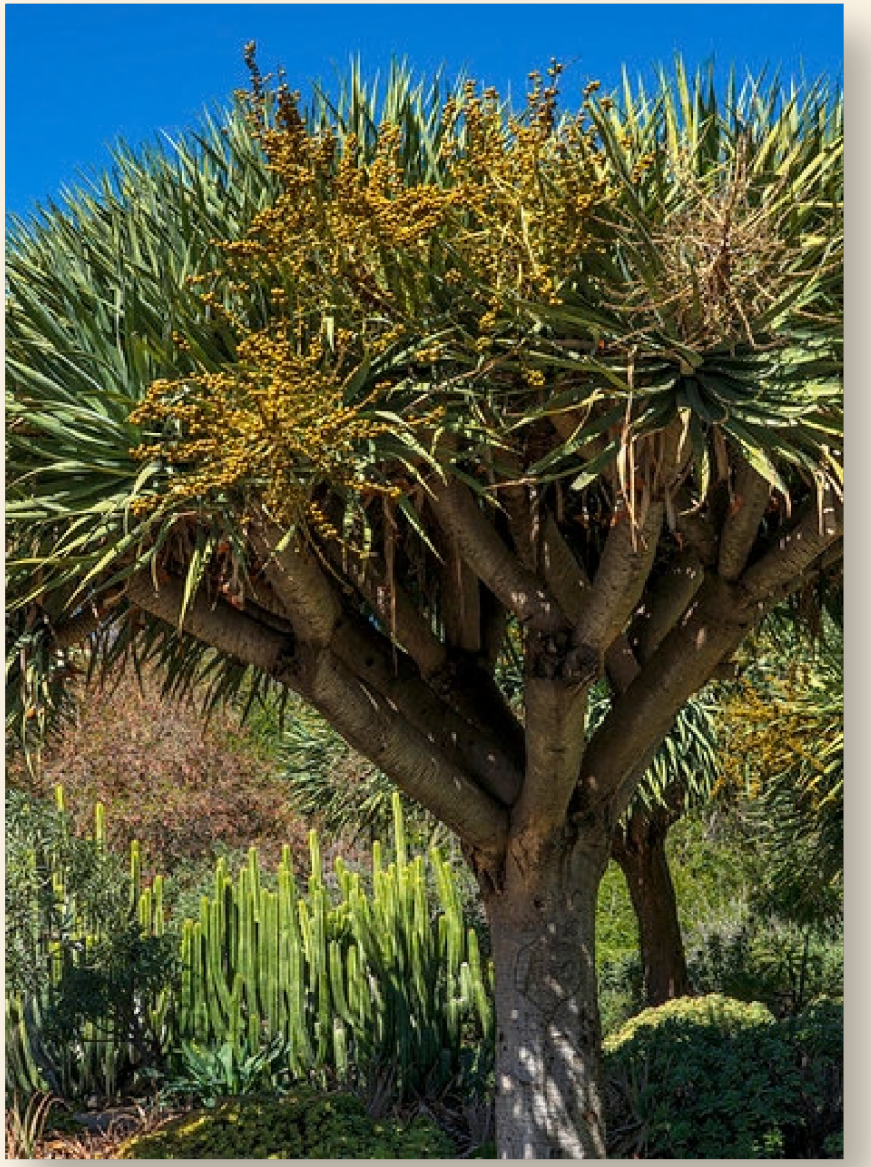


DRAGON TREE

FREAKY FLORA

Greek myth tells of Hercules slaying Ladon, a hundred-headed dragon guarding the golden apples of the Hesperides. As the beast's lifeblood spilled into the earth, these strange trees sprouted where the blood fell. True to legend, when the trunk or leaves are cut, the dragon tree secretes a thick, crimson sap known as "Dragon's Blood"—a rare resin long prized in ancient medicine, alchemy, and magic.

- **Common Name:** Dragon Tree
- **Scientific Name:** *Dracaena draco*
- **Height:** 30–50 feet, occasionally up to 60 feet
- **Region:** Native to Canary Islands and surrounding areas
- **Habitat:** Rocky, dry, subtropical landscapes; adapted to arid conditons, intense sun, and limited rainfall
- **Key Features:** Thick gray trunk, sword-shaped leaves, and a distinctive umbrella-shaped canopy created by repeated branching
- **Ecological Role:** Flowers and berries provide resources for insects and birds, while its dense branching structure can provide shelter for wildlife
- **Cultural Significance:** Famous since ancient times for its dark red resin known as “dragon’s blood.” The resin inspired legends and was historically traded and used as a pigment, dye, varnish, incense, and medicinal substance



ELDER TREE

FREAKY FLORA

Historically, elder trees were planted near homes to ward off evil and bring good fortune—provided you left gifts for the Elder Mother living inside. Taking from the tree without permission, however, invited a haunting. Considered a bridge to the fairy realm, folklore warned that falling asleep under its branches meant waking up trapped in the fairy world forever.

- **Common Name:** Elder/ Elderberry
- **Scientific Name:** *Sambucus nigra*
- **Height:** Typically 13–20 feet, but can reach 30–50 feet under favorable conditions
- **Region:** Native to Europe and parts of western Asia and North Africa
- **Habitat:** Woodland edges, hedgerows, disturbed areas, and gardens; favors fertile, moderately moist soils
- **Key Features:** Creamy-white clusters of fragrant flowers followed by dark purple-black berries; pinnate leaves with 5–7 toothed leaflets and soft, pith-filled stems
- **Ecological Role:** Flowers provide nectar and pollen for insects, while the berries are an important food source for birds and other wildlife
- **Notable Adaptation:** Elder grows quickly and readily colonizes disturbed habitats, while its berries encourage birds to disperse its seeds across the landscape
- **Traditional Medicinal Use:** Elderflowers and berries have a long history of use in traditional remedies, particularly for colds and respiratory complaints. Flowers and properly prepared ripe berries are also used in teas, cordials, syrups, jams, and wines



FENNEL

FREAKY FLORA

In medieval Europe, fennel was revered not just as a culinary staple, but as a potent botanical shield against supernatural forces. On Midsummer's Eve—a night when the veil between realms was believed to thin—households hung stalks of fennel over doorways to ward off evil spirits and witches. To ensure total protection, superstitious residents would even stuff the tiny, aromatic seeds into door keyholes to keep roving ghosts from slipping inside.



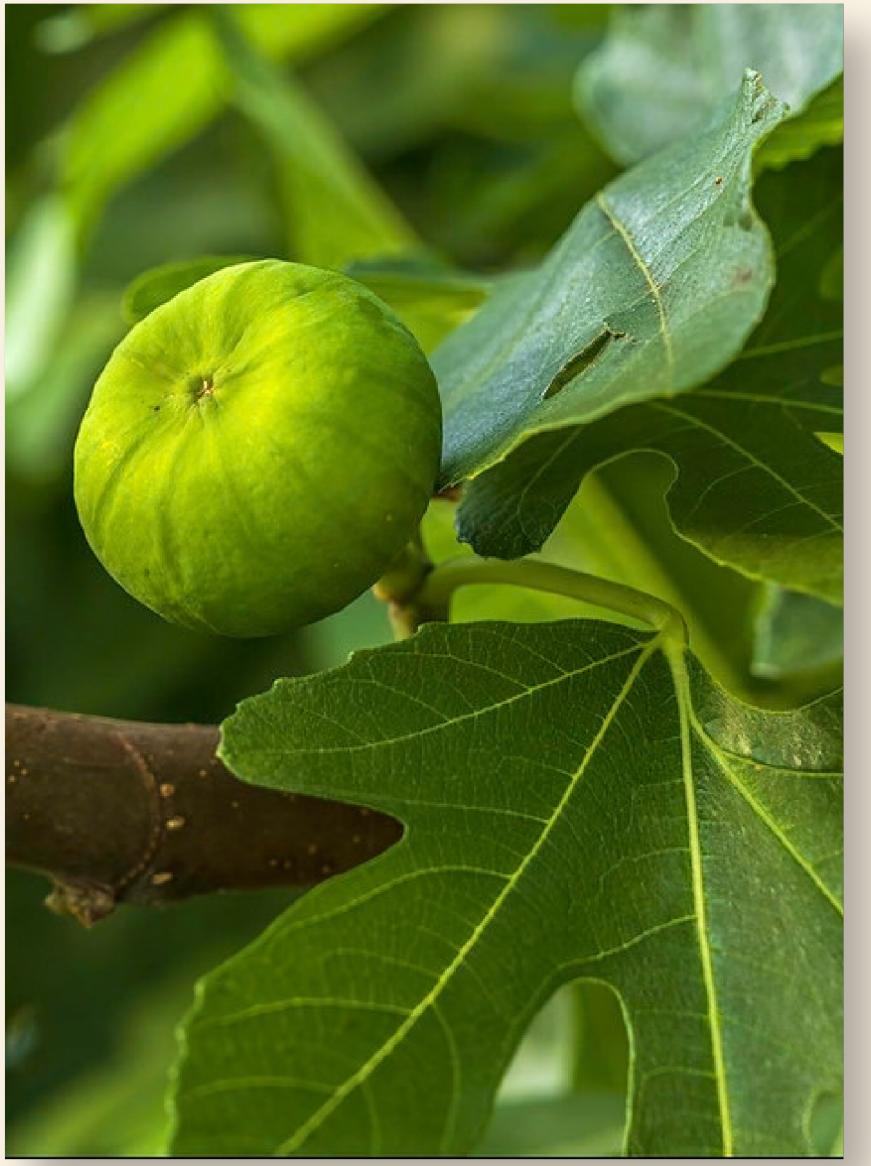
- **Common Name:** Fennel
- **Scientific Name:** *Foeniculum vulgare*
- **Height:** 3-8 feet
- **Region:** Native to the Mediterranean region and southern Europe
- **Habitat:** Dry, sunny areas, roadsides, disturbed ground, coastal habitats, and rocky soils
- **Key Features:** Tall hollow stems, delicate feathery leaves, clusters of tiny yellow flowers, and a distinctive sweet anise or licorice-like scent produced by aromatic compounds such as anethole
- **Ecological Role:** Flowers attract bees, butterflies, flies, wasps, and other beneficial insects. In some regions, however, wild fennel spreads aggressively and can displace native vegetation
- **Notable Adaptation:** Its deep roots, narrow feathery leaves, and ability to tolerate dry conditions help fennel thrive in hot Mediterranean environments and disturbed landscapes
- **Cultural Significance:** Fennel has been used since ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman times. In Greek mythology, Prometheus was said to have stolen fire from the gods and carried it to humanity hidden inside a hollow fennel stalk
- **Culinary Use:** Nearly every part is edible. Leaves, seeds, and pollen are used as seasonings, while Florence fennel produces the familiar swollen "bulb" eaten raw or cooked

FIGS

FREAKY FLORA

To reproduce, figs depend on a bizarre lifecycle- a tiny female fig wasp crawls inside the fruit to lay eggs, losing her wings and dying within. Her wingless male offspring hatch first, mate with the females, and die without ever leaving. The newly hatched females then break free to carry on the cycle. Before you eat, don't worry—the fig produces a special enzyme, ficin, that completely breaks down the wasp's body into protein. Those crunching bits you feel are purely seeds, not bug parts!

- **Common Name:** Fig/ Common Fig
- **Scientific Name:** *Ficus carica*
- **Height:** Typically 10-30 feet tall.
- **Region:** Native to Mediterranean region and western Asia
- **Habitat:** Warm, sunny environments with well-drained soil
- **Key Features:** What looks like a single fig “fruit” is actually a syconium—a hollow structure lined with many tiny flowers on the inside, which develop into numerous tiny fruits
- **Ecological Role:** Fig trees provide an important food source for birds, mammals, and insects. Many Ficus species have highly specialized relationships with tiny fig wasps that pollinate their hidden flowers
- **Traditional Medicinal Use:** Figs have a long history of use as both food and traditional medicine, particularly for digestive health. The fruits provide fiber, potassium, calcium, magnesium, and plant compounds such as polyphenols

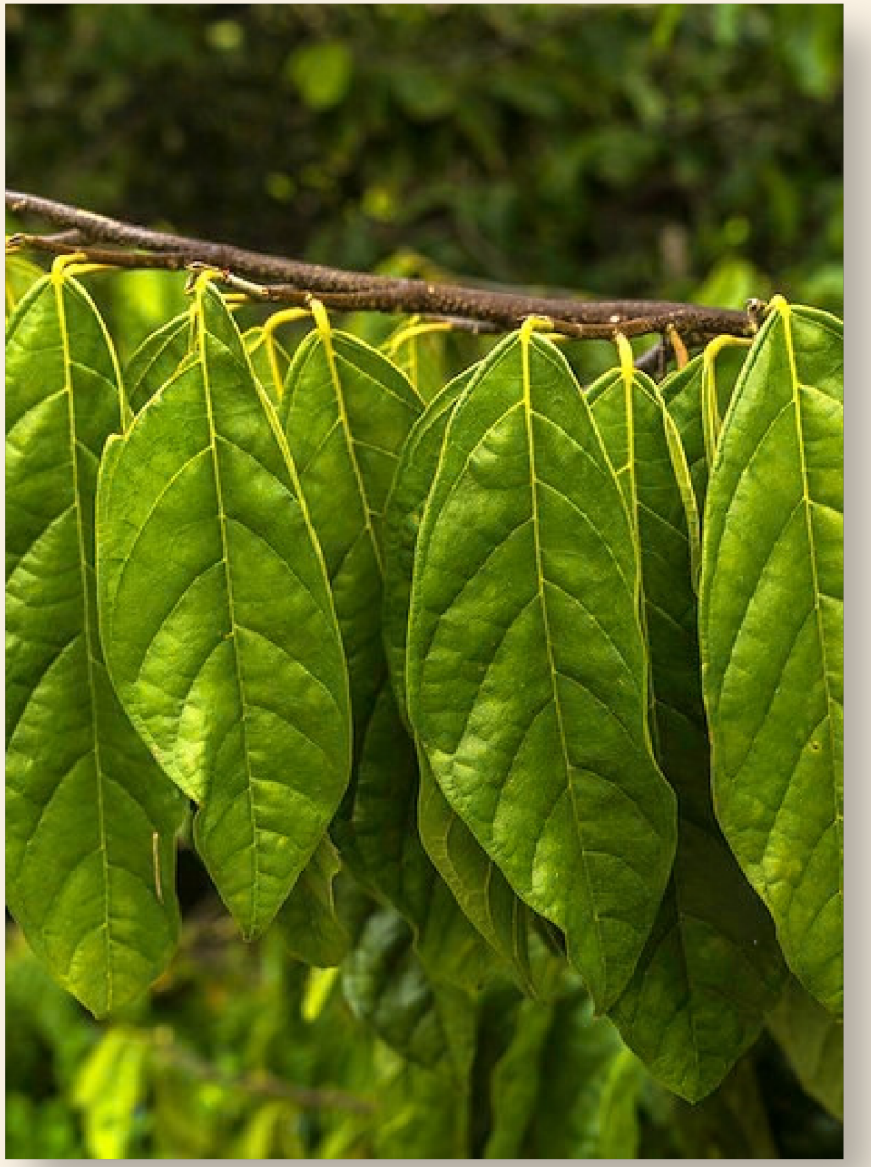


FLOR DE CACAO

FREAKY FLORA

Earning its ominous nickname—"Funeral Tree"—this tropical species produces white flowers with a scent so powerful it lingers for decades after drying. Indigenous peoples in Guatemala used the blossoms for food preservation and funeral rites, leaving behind flowers that still remain sweet-smelling inside centuries-old crypts.

- **Common Name:** Flo de Cacao
- **Scientific Name:** *Quararibea funebris*
- **Height:** 30-60 feet
- **Region:** Native to Mexico and Central America
- **Habitat:** Tropical and subtropical forests of Mesoamerica
- **Key Features:** Produces small pale flowers with an unusually powerful, spicy fragrance that can remain noticeable even after the flowers have been dried
- **Cultural Significance:** The dried flowers are an important traditional ingredient in tejate, an ancient Oaxacan beverage made with maize and cacao. The tree and its flowers have also been associated with ceremonies, celebrations, and funerary traditions
- **Traditional Medicinal Use:** Flowers and other parts of the plant have been used in traditional remedies for ailments including fever, cough, fatigue, anxiety, and menstrual discomfort
- **Notable Adaptation:** The flowers contain exceptionally persistent aromatic compounds—their distinctive fragrance can remain even after they have been dried and stored



MARIGOLDS

FREAKY FLORA

Called the flor de muerto ("flower of the dead"), the marigold carries a rich, melancholic beauty. Ancient Aztec tradition tied its sun-like glow to the deity Tonatiuh. Today, these blooms serve a haunting purpose—their glowing orange petals are laid out to form a luminous pathway, guiding spirits through the dark and back to the realm of the living. Both the Mexican Mint Marigold and the African Marigold are used for Day of the Dead alters.

- **Common Name:** Mexican Mint Marigold
- **Scientific Name:** *Tagetes lucida*
- **Height:** Typically 1-2.5 feet tall
- **Region:** Native to Mexico and Central America
- **Habitat:** Sunny, open areas with well-drained soil; tolerant of heat and seasonal drought
- **Key Features:** Distinctive swollen, bottle-shaped trunk that stores water; narrow or deeply lobed leaves; cream-colored, bell-shaped flowers
- **Ecological Role:** Flowers provide nectar and pollen for bees, butterflies, moths, and other insects
- **Cultural Significance:** Known as yauhtli in Nahuatl, this aromatic plant held an important place in pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican ceremony and medicine. It was burned as incense, incorporated into offerings, and associated with religious rituals

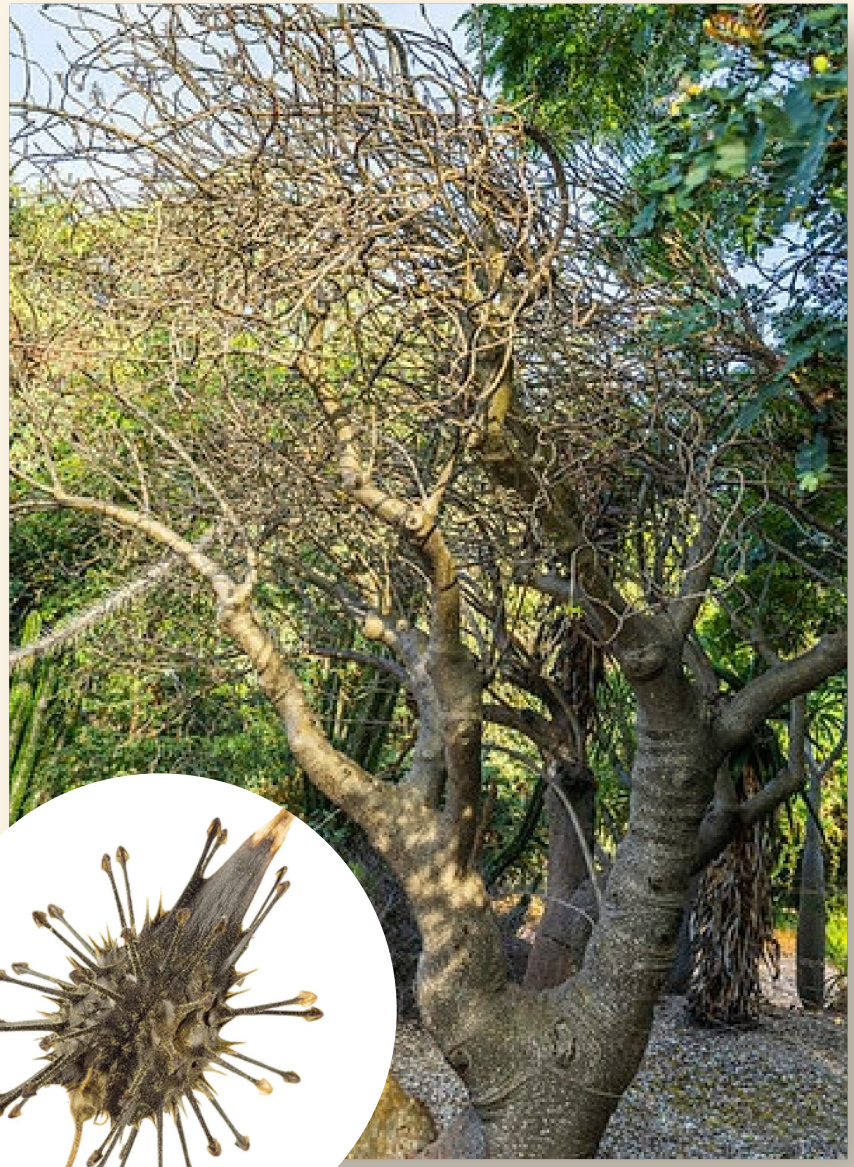


MOUSE TRAP TREE

FREAKY FLORA

Adorned with horned seed pods featuring tiny barbed "fishhooks," this species uses its sharp stalks to hitch a ride on passing wildlife. While designed to catch in animal fur for seed dispersal, these vicious hooks occasionally snag small creatures like mice. Early botanists once speculated the plant intentionally trapped rodents to feed on the nutrients from their decomposing bodies. However, the theory of this tree being an indirect carnivore has since been debunked.

- **Common Name:** Mouse Trap Tree / Succulent Sesame
- **Scientific Name:** *Uncarina grandidieri*
- **Height:** Typically about 10 feet
- **Region:** Endemic to Madagascar
- **Habitat:** Dry woodlands, arid scrublands, and Madagascar's distinctive spiny thickets
- **Key Features:** Thick, succulent-like trunk; soft, velvety leaves; showy yellow trumpet-shaped flowers with dark centers; and unusual woody seed pods covered in hooked spines
- **Ecological Role:** Its hooked fruits attach to the fur of passing animals, allowing seeds to hitch a ride away from the parent plant before eventually falling to the ground
- **Notable Adaptation:** The seed pod functions like botanical Velcro—its sharp hooks grab onto passing animals and use their movement as a method of seed dispersal

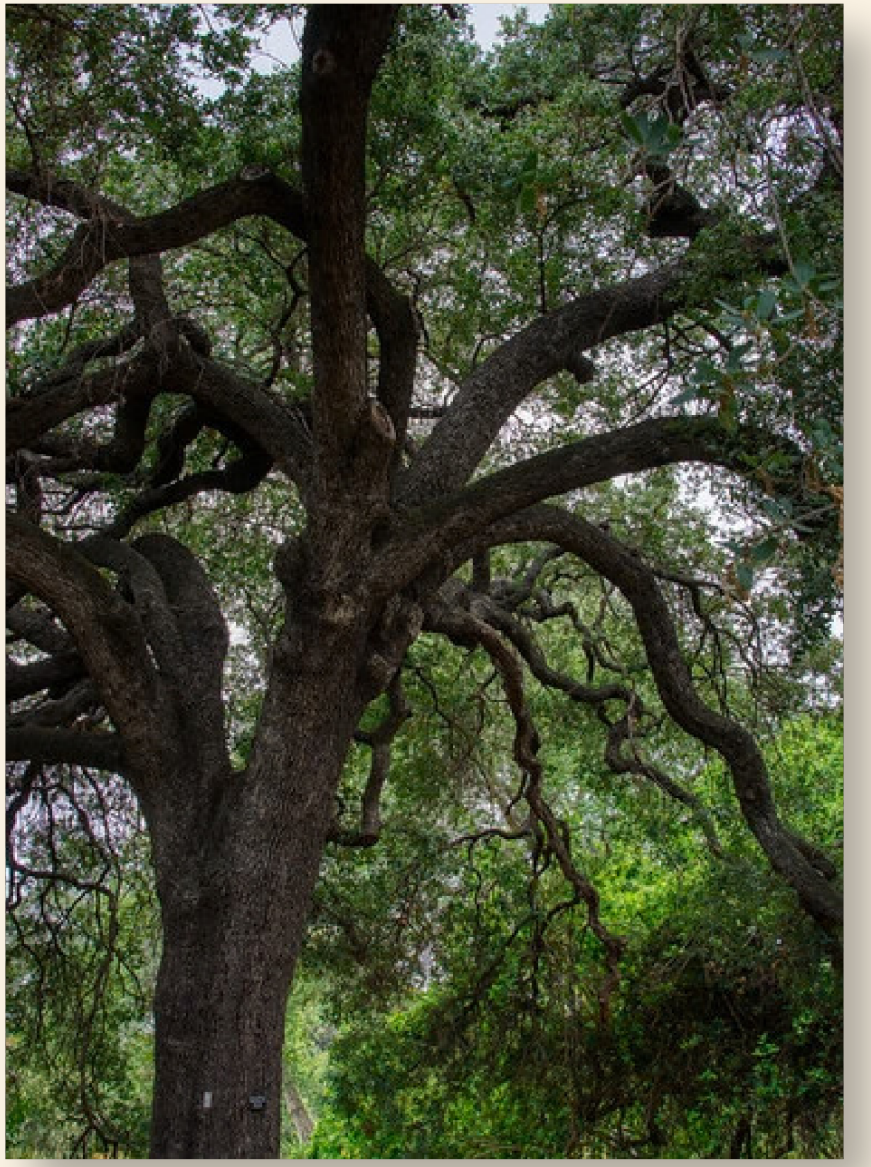


OAK TREES

FREAKY FLORA

Across ancient folklore, giant trees were believed to harbor powerful tree spirits. To the Celtic Druids, the oak was the most sacred of all. They gathered beneath its branches to conduct divination rituals, consult spirits, and harvest ceremonial mistletoe, viewing the tree as a direct channel to divine energy.

- **Common Name:** Oak
- **Scientific Name:** *Quercus* spp.
- **Height:** Typically 50-100 feet
- **Region:** Found throughout much of the Northern Hemisphere
- **Habitat:** Forests, woodlands, grasslands, and chaparral; different species are adapted to environments ranging from cool, moist forests to hot, dry Mediterranean climates
- **Key Features:** Long-lived trees with strong, spreading branches and distinctive acorns; leaves may be lobed, toothed, or smooth-edged and either deciduous or evergreen depending on the species
- **Ecological Role:** Oaks are exceptionally important habitat trees. Their leaves, bark, cavities, and acorns provide food and shelter for hundreds of species of insects, birds, mammals, fungi, and other organisms
- **Notable Adaptation:** Acorns contain tannins that discourage many insects and animals from eating them, while squirrels, jays, and other animals inadvertently help oaks reproduce by carrying and burying acorns that sometimes go uneaten
- **Traditional Use:** Acorns have been an important traditional food for many cultures when properly processed to remove bitter tannins. Oak's strong, durable wood has also been used for centuries for buildings, ships, furniture, tools, and barrels

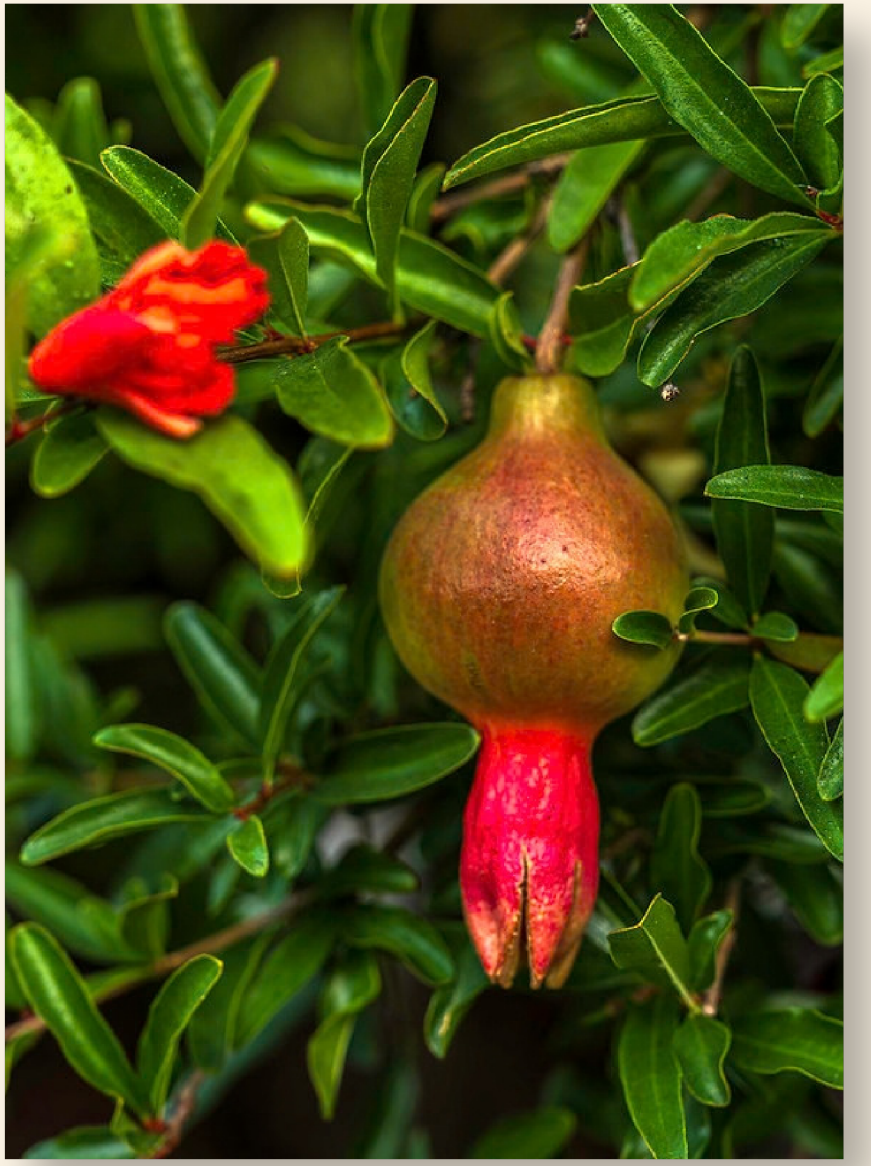


POMEGRANATE

FREAKY FLORA

The pomegranate is deeply rooted in mythology, most famously in the Greek story of Demeter and Persephone. After Persephone was abducted by Hades, she ate six pomegranate seeds in the underworld, forcing her to spend six months there every year. During this time, a grieving Demeter made the earth barren—explaining the creation of winter and the changing of the seasons, as well as symbolizing the cycle of death and rebirth.

- **Common Name:** Pomegranate
- **Scientific Name:** *Punica granatum*
- **Height:** 5-20 feet
- **Region:** Native to a region extending from Iran into northern India; cultivated throughout the Mediterranean and other warm regions for thousands of years
- **Habitat:** Dry, sunny environments with hot summers; highly tolerant of heat and drought once established
- **Key Features:** Glossy green leaves, brilliant orange-red flowers, and round fruits with tough leathery skins. Inside, hundreds of seeds are surrounded by juicy red structures called arils
- **Ecological Role:** Flowers provide nectar and pollen for bees and other insects, while ripe fruits can provide food for birds and other wildlife
- **Cultural Significance:** One of the ancient world's most symbolically important fruits. Its abundance of seeds has made it a symbol of fertility, abundance, life, death, and rebirth across Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and Asian cultures
- **Traditional Medicinal Use:** The fruit, rind, flowers, and other parts of the plant have been used in traditional medicine, particularly for digestive complaints and other ailments

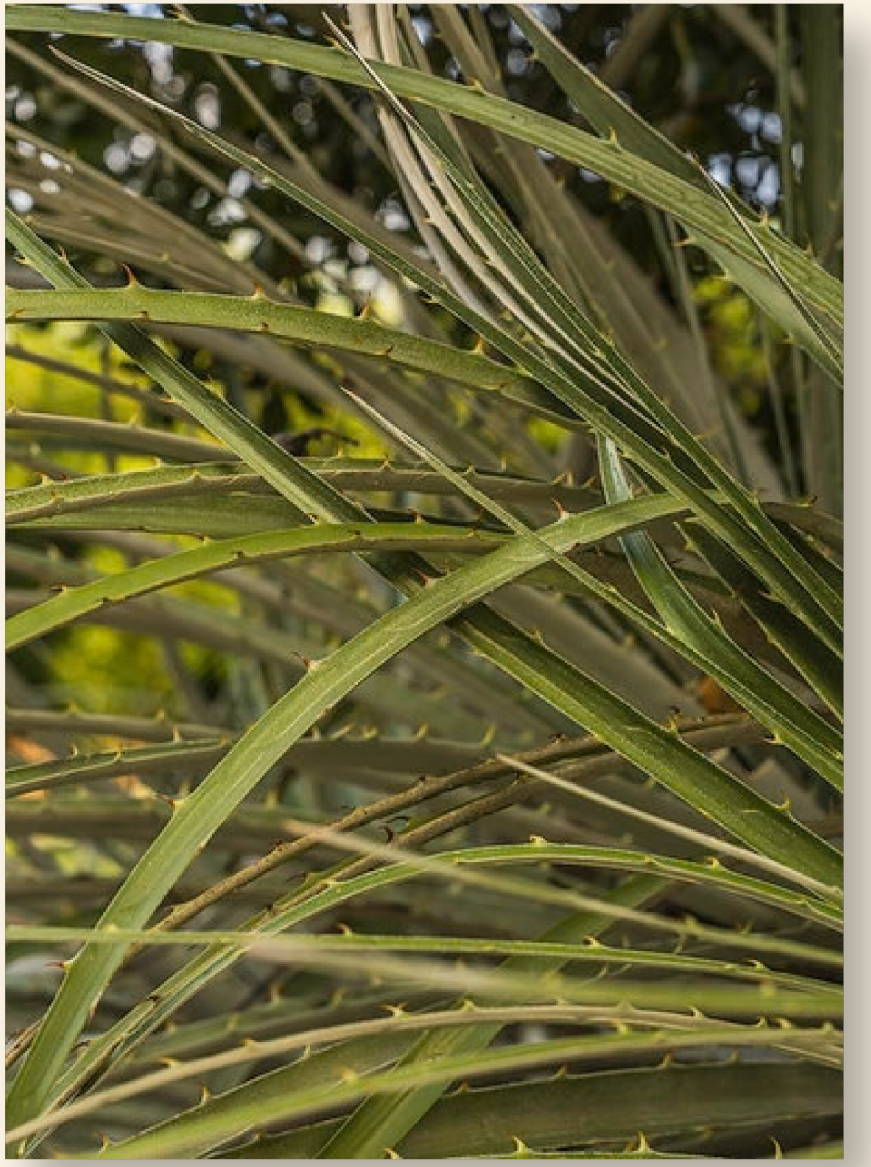


PUYA PLANT

FREAKY FLORA

Nicknamed the "sheep-eating plant," this dramatic Andean giant features razor-sharp, hooked spines along its leaves. Livestock like sheep or birds can easily get snagged in the sharp foliage, becoming hopelessly trapped. While early theories suggested the plant intentionally snared prey to absorb nutrients from their decomposing bodies, botanists have since debunked the idea of indirect carnivory—though the deadly traps are very real.

- **Common Name:** Puya Plant
- **Scientific Name:** *Puya chilensis*
- **Height:** Leafy rosettes typically reach 3–6 feet tall, with flowering stalks reaching around 10–15 feet
- **Region:** Native to Central Chile
- **Habitat:** Dry, rocky hillsides and slopes with intense sunlight, low rainfall, and well-drained soils
- **Key Features:** Dense rosettes of long, rigid leaves lined with extremely sharp, backward-curving spines; produces towering flower stalks covered in yellow-green flowers
- **Ecological Role:** Its nectar-rich flowers attract birds and other pollinators, while its dense growth provides habitat and protection for small wildlife
- **Notable Adaptation:** Its thick leaves help conserve water, while vicious backward-facing spines protect the plant from hungry herbivores
- **Cultural Significance:** The plant's tough leaf fibers have traditionally been used in Chile for cordage and fishing nets

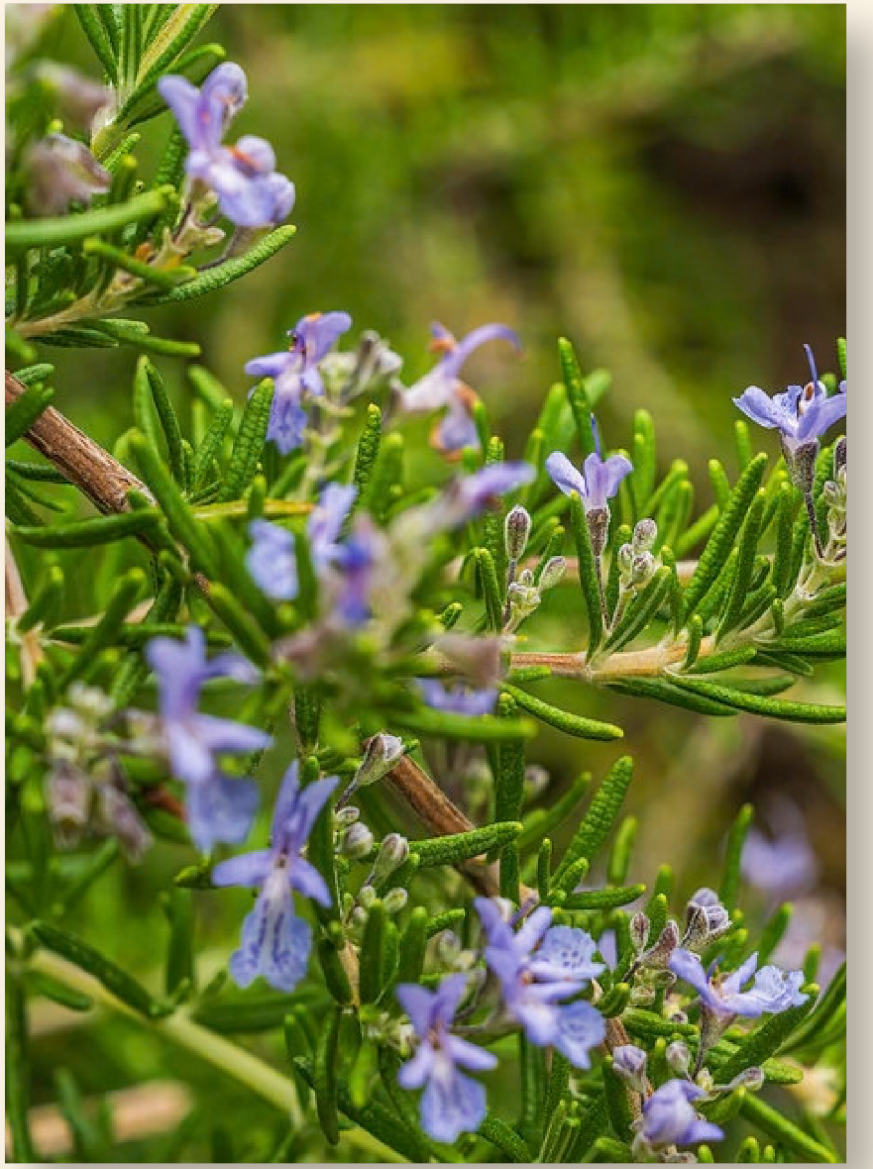


ROSEMARY

FREAKY FLORA

Long tied to memory and mourning, rosemary was traditionally woven into funeral bouquets as a symbol of remembrance. Its powerful, aromatic scent served an equally vital purpose in early funeral rites: disguising the smell of the deceased.

- **Common Name:** Rosemary
- **Scientific Name:** *Salvia rosmarinus*
- **Height:** 2–6.5 feet
- **Region:** Native to the Mediterranean region
- **Habitat:** Dry, sunny areas with well-draining, sandy or rocky soils
- **Key Features:** Evergreen shrub with fragrant, needle-like leaves and small blue, lavender, pink, or white flowers; highly drought-tolerant
- **Ecological Role:** Provides nectar and pollen for bees and other pollinators, especially during cooler months when fewer plants are blooming
- **Notable Uses:** Widely used as a culinary herb and traditionally associated with remembrance, protection, and medicinal practices

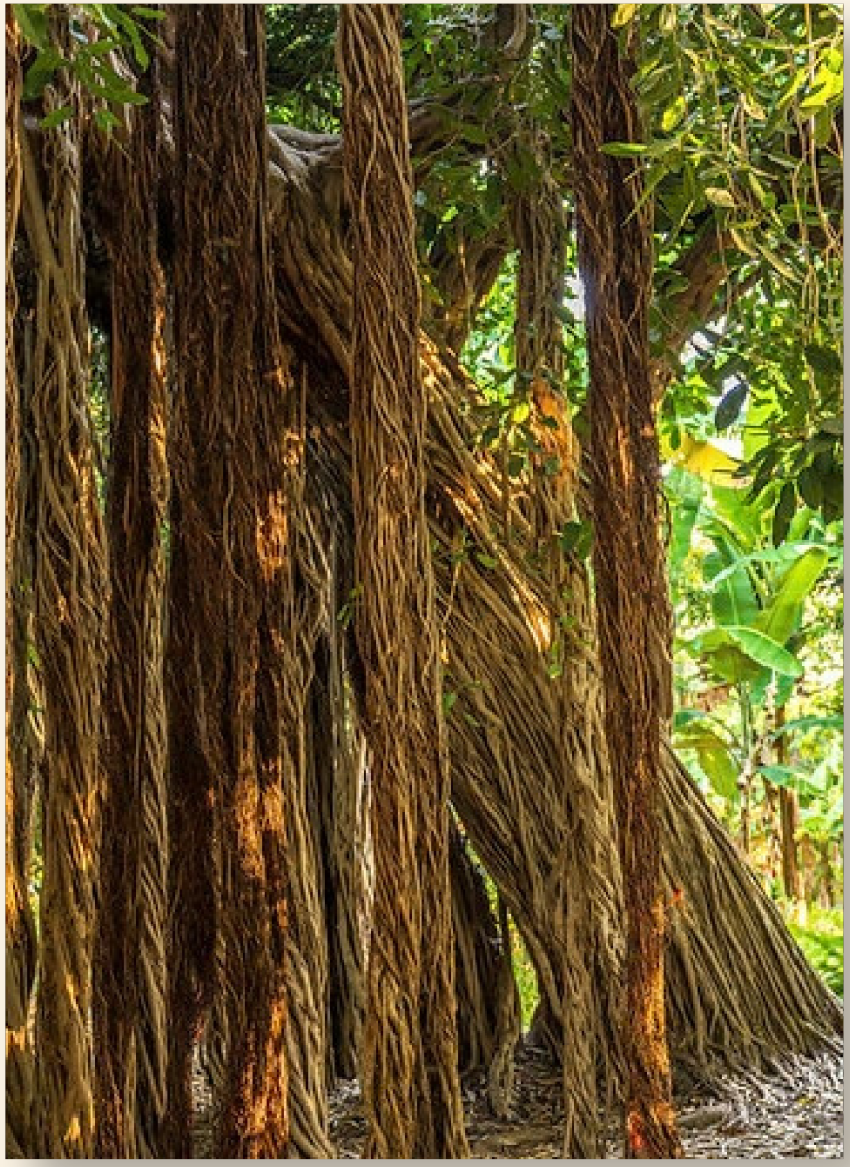


STRANGLER FIG

FREAKY FLORA

Living up to its sinister name, this plant begins life high in another tree's branches before dropping aerial roots to the ground. Once anchored in the soil, its roots multiply and fuse, wrapping a wooden cage around the host. By blocking sunlight and stealing root nutrients, the fig starves its host to death, leaving behind a hollow woody shell.

- **Common Name:** Strangler Fig
- **Scientific Name:** *Ficus* spp. (several species are commonly called strangler figs)
- **Height:** Some species can reach around 100 feet tall
- **Region:** Tropical and subtropical regions of the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Australia
- **Habitat:** Humid tropical and subtropical forests, particularly dense forests where competition for sunlight is intense
- **Key Features:** Begins life high in another tree rather than on the forest floor; produces aerial roots that descend toward the soil and eventually form a dense, lattice-like structure around its host
- **Ecological Role:** Considered an important keystone resource in many tropical forests. Figs provide food for birds, bats, monkeys, and other wildlife, while tangled roots and hollow structures provide shelter for numerous animals
- **Notable Adaptation:** Instead of struggling to grow from the dark forest floor, a strangler fig starts its life in the canopy after an animal deposits its seed on another tree. It then sends roots downward until they reach the soil



SUGAR CANE

FREAKY FLORA

Believe it or not, the source of our October trick-or-treat haul is actually a giant, sweet grass! Raw, unrefined cane grass tastes far less intensely sugary than processed white sugar. Because it remains unprocessed, the raw stalk retains 17 amino acids, 11 minerals, 6 vitamins, and health-boosting antioxidants.

- **Common Name:** Sugarcane
- **Scientific Name:** *Saccharum officinarum*
- **Height:** 10-20 feet
- **Region:** Domesticated in New Guinea thousands of years ago and later spread throughout Southeast Asia, India, the Mediterranean, and eventually the Americas
- **Habitat:** Warm tropical and subtropical environments with abundant sunlight, water, and a long growing season
- **Key Features:** A tall perennial grass with thick, jointed stalks that store large concentrations of sucrose; new plants are commonly grown from sections of mature stalk rather than from seed
- **Ecological Role:** Dense stands can provide cover for insects and small animals, while flowering sugarcane provides resources for insects; today, however, it is primarily grown as a large-scale agricultural crop
- **Notable Adaptation:** Unlike many grasses, sugarcane stores tremendous amounts of energy as sucrose inside its thick stems, creating the sweet juice that eventually made it one of the world's most economically important crops
- **Cultural Significance:** Sugarcane has profoundly shaped human history. The enormous demand for sugar fueled colonial plantation economies and became deeply intertwined with the transatlantic slave trade and the forced labor of millions of enslaved Africans and Indigenous peoples, particularly in the Caribbean and Americas



TREES WITH EYES

FREAKY FLORA

Some trees, like these bottle trees, have eye-like markings on their trunks. Many cultures saw such trees as sacred, with the eyes symbolizing protection or a guardian spirit. The eyes were seen as a form of communication or guidance from nature spirits. These markings are natural patterns caused by knots, burls, fungal growth, lichen, or bark scars.

- **Common Name:** Narrow-Leaved Bottle Tree / Queensland Bottle Tree
- **Scientific Name:** *Brachychiton rupestris*
- **Height:** 33–66 feet, occasionally up to 82 feet
- **Region:** Native to Queensland and northern New South Wales, Australia
- **Habitat:** Dry woodlands, scrublands, and semi-evergreen vine thickets
- **Key Features:** Distinctive swollen, bottle-shaped trunk that stores water; narrow or deeply lobed leaves; cream-colored, bell-shaped flowers
- **Ecological Role:** Provides shade, shelter, and habitat for birds and other wildlife and is an important tree in Australia's threatened bottle-tree scrub communities



WHITE SAGE

FREAKY FLORA

Native to Southern California and northern Baja California—the only region where it grows wild—white sage has long been revered as "Sacred Sage." Indigenous peoples of these lands were the first to burn the plant in ritual practice to cleanse negative energy, clear unwanted spiritual presence, and invite protective energy into a space.



- **Common Name:** White Sage
- **Scientific Name:** *Salvia apiana*
- **Height:** 3–6 feet tall and wide; flower stalks can reach up to 6 feet
- **Region:** Native to the southwestern United States and northern Mexico, particularly California and Baja California
- **Habitat:** Dry, rocky soils; sunny, arid environments; coastal chaparral, desert regions, and other drought-prone landscapes
- **Cultural Significance**: A culturally important plant to Indigenous peoples of Southern California and northern Baja California, with traditions that include ceremonial, spiritual, food, and medicinal uses.
- **Traditional Medicinal Use**: Traditionally used in various ways for ailments including sore throats, stomach discomfort, colds, and skin conditions.
- **Conservation Considerations:** Growing commercial demand has raised concerns about unauthorized and unsustainable harvesting of wild white sage. Cultivated or responsibly sourced plants help protect wild populations.
- **Ecological Role:** Provides nectar and pollen for bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and other pollinators.

WORMWOOD

FREAKY FLORA

Legend says wormwood first sprouted from the slithering tail tracks of the Serpent leaving the Garden of Eden. While ancient Egyptians prized its bitterness as a cure for parasitic worms, medieval folk beliefs claimed it could rob a person of their courage—though a topically applied wormwood balm was touted to drive away night-stalking goblins.

- **Common Name:** Wormwood
- **Scientific Name:** *Artemisia absinthium*
- **Height:** 2-4 feet tall
- **Region:** Native to Europe, western Asia, and North Africa
- **Habitat:** Dry, sunny areas, rocky slopes, roadsides, and disturbed soils
- **Key Features:** Silvery-gray, deeply divided leaves covered in fine hairs; small yellow flowers; intensely aromatic foliage with an exceptionally bitter taste
- **Notable Adaptation:** Its intensely bitter and aromatic chemical compounds help discourage insects and herbivores from feeding on the plant
- **Traditional Medicinal Use**: Historically used as a digestive bitter and as a remedy for intestinal worms—one possible origin of the name “wormwood.” These traditional uses should not be interpreted as established treatments
- **Cultural Significance:** Wormwood has been used since antiquity in medicine and ritual and later became famous as a defining ingredient in absinthe, the green spirit that developed a notorious reputation in 19th-century Europe

