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A hungry deer in a desert is looking for some food.

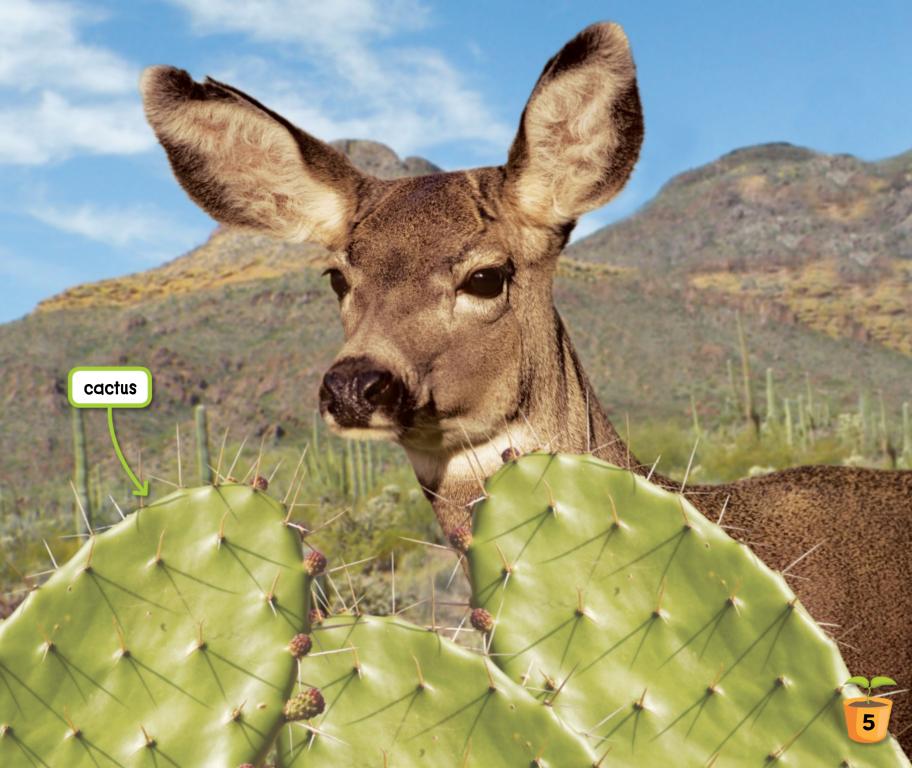
It spots a large juicy cactus—but it doesn't dare take a bite.

Why?

The cactus has a way to make sure it doesn't end up as the deer's dinner.

Why do you think the deer won't eat the cactus?

A cactus is
a type of plant that
can survive in hot, dry
places. Most cactuses,
or cacti, grow in
rocky or sandy
deserts.



# Prickly Protection

Plants can't move away from animals that want to eat them.

So some plants, such as cacti, have sharp prickles that are painful to touch or eat.

The prickles on a cactus are called **spines**.

Animals don't try to eat a cactus because the sharp spines would poke them.

cactus





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# Read More

Gould, Margee. Prickly Plants (The Strangest Plants on Earth). New York: PowerKids Press (2012). Maurer, Tracy. What's in a Cactus? Vero Beach, FL: Rourke (2011).

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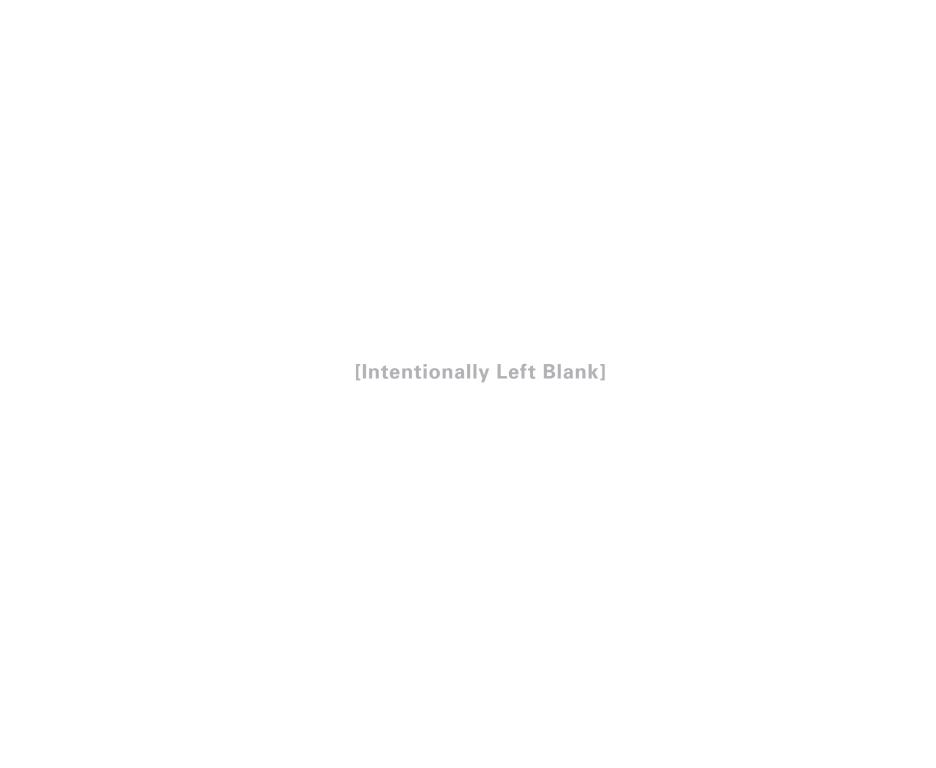
# Learn More Online

To learn more about prickly plants, visit www.bearportpublishing.com/Plant-ology

## **About the Author**

Ellen Lawrence lives in the United Kingdom. Her favorite books to write are those about nature and animals. In fact, the first book Ellen bought for herself, when she was six years old, was the story of a gorilla named Patty Cake that was born in New York's Central Park Zoo.









Why are some plants so prickly? Look inside to learn the answer to this question. Along the way, you'll also find out how plants use their needle-like spines, thorns, and other prickly parts to survive in harsh environments and other dangerous places.

Amazing Plant Bodies
Tiny to Gigantic

Meat-Eating Plants
Toothless Wonders

Cooking with Sunshine
How Plants Make Food

Poison Petals
Don't Eat!

Freaky Plant Facts
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What Lily Gets from Bee
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