Who's who?

1. Ogre-faced Spider
When it's time to catch a meal, this spider has a special trick. First it spins a web of silk. Then it grabs the corners of the web with its four front legs. Then it hangs upside down and waits for insects to crawl by along the ground. When they do, the spider drops the web over them like a net and pulls up its meal. Ogre-faced spiders live in the southeastern United States and in tropical areas around the world. They're usually active at night. In addition to dropping their web over crawling insects, they may hold their web out in the air so that flying insects get caught in it.

2. Rafflesia
This plant with an enormous reddish, rotten-smelling flower is a parasite that lives on the roots of a tropical forest vine. The flowers may be more than three feet (91 cm) across and weigh over 35 pounds (16 kg). They bloom for only three days and depend on flies to pollinate them. Rafflesias grow in the rain forests of Indonesia. Large, hoofed mammals in these forests transport the seeds from place to place on the bottoms of their hooves and push seeds into the soil as they walk. The plant's flowers may take two years to develop.

3. Satin Bower Bird
At breeding time, the male bird builds a house of sticks. Then he decorates the stick house with shells, feathers, flowers, clothespins, jewelry, and other objects that he fancies. His favorite color is bright blue. He may also paint the inside of the stick house using berry juice and charcoal sticks. Female birds are attracted to the male's handiwork. These birds live in the forests and woodlands of Australia. Females are attracted to the bower, but once a female has mated with a male she goes off on her own to build a nest and raise her young.

4. Black-eyed Susan
These yellow and black flowers seem to be just like any other wildflower you might find in a field. However, they have special ultraviolet markings on their petals that can't be seen by human eyes. These markings serve as an illuminated landing pad for pollinating insects. Black-eyed Susans have colored markings that seem to advertise, or lead pollinators to, their food source. Patterns of lines, dots, or solid colors lure insects to the spot where they will inadvertently pollinate the flower. Markings on the petal reflect ultraviolet light, which is visible to many pollinating insects but not to humans. The petals of the black-eyed Susan appear to be solid yellow to people. To bees, however, the petals have two tones, with ultraviolet markings near the blossom's center, at the source of the nectar.

5. Archer Fish
When this fish wants a meal, it looks for insects above the surface of the water. When it spies one, the fish spits water up at it. The fish can hit an insect accurately at four feet (122 cm), knock it into the water, and gobble it up. Archer fish live in Southeast Asia in mangrove swamps and other areas along the coasts, as well as in rivers. They have a groove on the roof of their mouth that, with their tongue pressed against it, becomes like the barrel of a pistol. If an archer fish misses its first shot at an insect, it can adjust its aim quickly and fire again.

6. Tenebrionid *(tuh-NEEbree-AH-nid)* Beetle
This beetle gets all the water it needs from fog. Standing on a dune in the desert where it lives, the beetle raises its back end into the fog. Droplets of water form on its body and run down toward its mouth. These particular tenebrionid beetles live in the Namib Desert in southwestern Africa. However, there are many other kinds of tenebrionid beetles throughout the world.

7. Skunk Cabbage
This plant is like an outdoor hot tub. The temperature inside its flowers is 36-63 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than the outside air. It gives insects a nice warm place to stay when it's cold out. Skunk cabbage flowers produce little pollen or nectar. Therefore, they rely on their warmth to attract pollinating insects. By successfully capturing warmth from the sun, the flowers attract insects without needing to use their own food energy to produce much pollen. The skunk cabbage provides insects with a warm place in the cold. In turn, the insects end up transporting pollen from one flower to another.

8. Strangler Fig
This tree starts out as a small, non-threatening seed that sprouts on the branch of another tree. Yet as it grows, its stems, roots, and leaves wrap completely around the host tree, stealing its water and blocking its sunlight. The host tree eventually dies a long, suffocating death. The strangler fig (Ficus sp.) has small seeds dispersed by animals and some become lodged in tree branches. The seed grows a long aerial root that makes contact with the ground. The young fig then grows more roots, stems, and leaves; eventually smothering and killing the host tree. In this way, the fig avoids competition, taking the place of a tree that already stands tall.

Student Page

Who's who?

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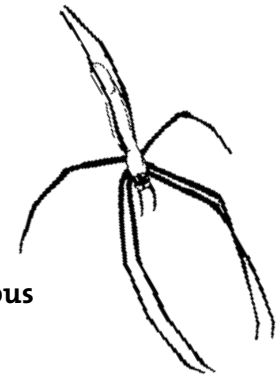

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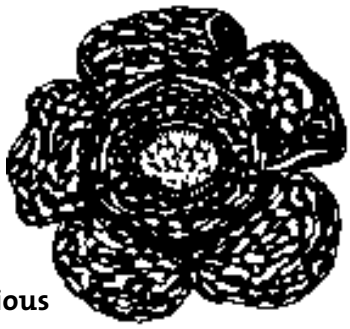

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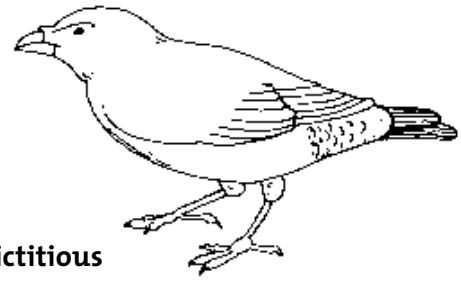

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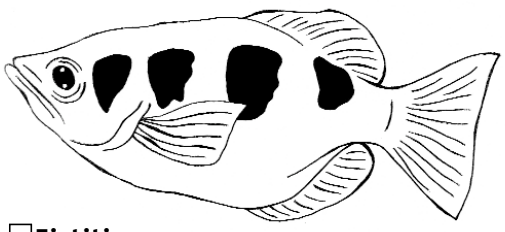

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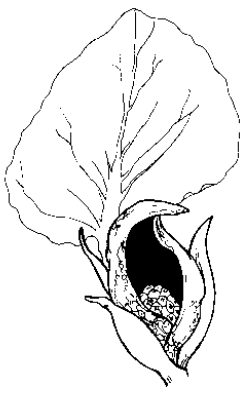

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