



Why we need plants to grow well

Plants are an important source of food for people. This is why we need to make sure that our food plants grow well.

As you now know, plants can make the food they need from the world around them. But people cannot do this, so they must eat either plants or animals.

Although there are hundreds of thousands of kinds of plants in the world, we can only get food from a very small number. That is why we have to make special efforts to grow the plants we can eat. We call these plants **CROPS** (Picture 1).

Cereals

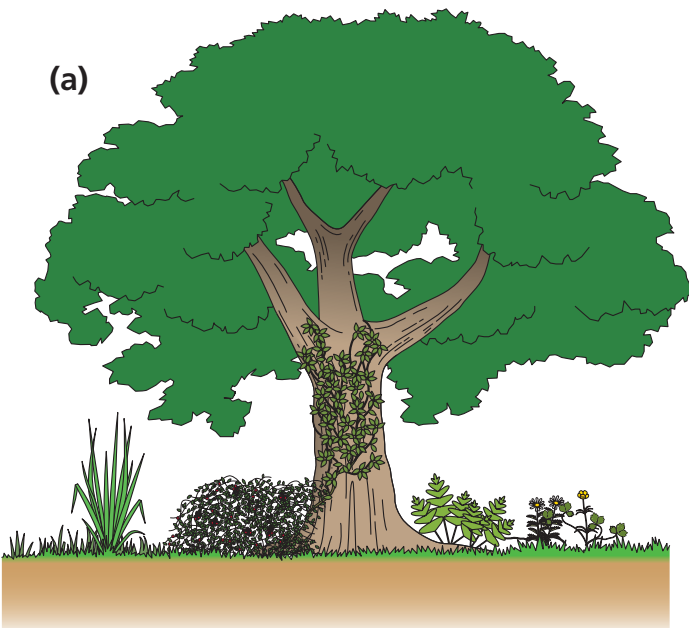
A plant stores most of its nourishment in its seeds, and sometimes in its roots. So farmers grow many plants for their seeds.

All of the seed-producing plants, such as wheat, barley (Picture 2), rice and maize (sweetcorn) are relatives of wild grasses. They are called **CEREAL CROPS**. Half of the world's people depend on rice; most of the rest depend on wheat and corn.

▼ (Picture 2) A field of barley.



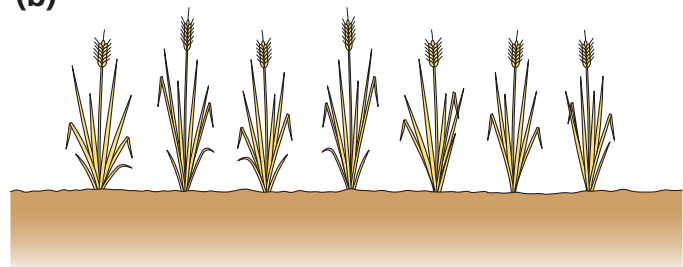
(a)



◀▼ (Picture 1) (a) This is a natural forest. In amongst it are a few wild plants that we can eat. But this land will not provide food for many people.

(b) This is farmland. The wild crops that we cannot eat have been cut down and the wild crops we can eat have been bred to be stronger and give more food. This land will provide food for many people.

(b)





▲ (Picture 3) Pumpkins are a traditional autumn dish. They are a vegetable crop.

Fruit and vegetables

A few plants store nourishment in their leaves or stems, or underground in swollen roots called tubers. Cabbage, carrots, turnips, sugar beet, pumpkins (Picture 3) and potatoes are some of these. They are called **VEGETABLES**.

We eat a range of **FRUITS** because they contain special nutrients that we need to stay healthy. Some fruits, like apples and mangoes, grow high in trees while others, like strawberries and bananas, grow on plants closer to the ground.

Pasture

We keep many animals to provide milk, eggs and meat. All of these animals have to eat too. So we also grow grass and cereals to feed animals. Grassland for animals to eat is called pasture.

Farmland

The places where food crops are grown, both for people and animals, are called farmland.

Farmers have to make sure that weeds do not grow in the fields where crops are planted. They must also protect crops from pests or being damaged by disease. This task takes up much of the farmer's time throughout the year.

Summary

- Growing plants is vital for our lives.
- The plants we can eat are called crops.
- Farms are places where food crops are grown.