



How does a plant grow?

People sometimes have difficulty keeping plants at home because they do not understand all of the plant's needs.

Some people are said to have 'green fingers', meaning that they are good at keeping their plants **HEALTHY** (Picture 1). Other people never seem to be able to get anything to grow.

You only have to look at the plants in people's gardens to find out that some people are better at growing plants than others. Farmers, of course, cannot afford to take chances with how well their plants will grow and have to make sure they get it right every year.

So why are plants so difficult to grow?



The parts of a plant

We can learn a lot about what a plant needs simply by looking at it (Picture 2).

Plants are made of two parts – the part above the ground and the part below the ground.

The part above the ground is made of **STEMS** and **BRANCHES**. On the branches are **LEAVES**, **FLOWERS** and **FRUIT**. Plants use their leaves to take in air and sunlight and make food. The flowers and fruit are used to make **SEEDS** which will produce new plants.

The part below the ground is the **ROOT**. All plants have roots, and most plants have a network of roots that branch out many times. The roots stretch out into the **SOIL** around the plant to gather water and **NOURISHMENT** for the plant.

If we can see how plants manage to grow, then we might be better able to see how we can help our own plants grow better. This is what we will do in the next pages.

◀ (Picture 1) Plants are living things, just as we are living things. You know that we need the right kind of food and water to keep us healthy, so we can expect that plants also have special needs. This means that simply watering a plant will not meet all of its needs.

