

Story

Burnett, Frances Hodgson. *The Secret Garden*. New York: HarperCollins, 1985. (1911) From Chapter Nine "The Strangest House Anyone Ever Lived In."

It was the sweetest, most mysterious-looking place any one could imagine. The high walls which shut it in were covered with the leafless stems of climbing roses which were so thick that they were matted together. Mary Lennox knew they were roses because she had seen a great many roses in India. All the ground was covered with grass of a wintry brown and out of it grew clumps of bushes which were surely rose-bushes if they were alive. There were numbers of standard roses which had so spread their branches that they were like little trees. There were other trees in the garden, and one of the things which made the place look strangest and loveliest was that climbing roses had run all over them and swung down long tendrils which made light swaying curtains, and here and there they had caught at each other or at a far-reaching branch and had crept from one tree to another and made lovely bridges of themselves. There were neither leaves nor roses on them now and Mary did not know whether they were dead or alive, but their thin gray or brown branches and sprays looked like a sort of hazy mantle spreading over everything, walls, and trees, and even brown grass, where they had fallen from their fastenings and run along the ground. It was this hazy tangle from tree to tree which made it all look so mysterious. Mary had thought it must be different from other gardens which had not been left all by themselves so long; and indeed it was different from any other place she had ever seen in her life.

"How still it is!" she whispered. "How still!"

Then she waited a moment and listened at the stillness. The robin, who had flown to his tree-top, was still as all the rest. He did not even flutter his wings; he sat without stirring, and looked at Mary.

"No wonder it is still," she whispered again. "I am the first person who has spoken in here for ten years."

She moved away from the door, stepping as softly as if she were afraid of awakening some one. She was glad that there was grass under her feet and that her steps made no sounds. She walked under one of the fairy-like gray arches between the trees and looked up at the sprays and tendrils which formed them.

"I wonder if they are all quite dead," she said. "Is it all a quite dead garden? I wish it wasn't."

If she had been Ben Weatherstaff she could have told whether the wood was alive by looking at it, but she could only see that there were only gray or brown sprays and branches and none showed any signs of even a tiny leaf-bud anywhere.

But she was *inside* the wonderful garden and she could come through the door under the ivy any time and she felt as if she had found a world all her own.

The sun was shining inside the four walls and the high arch of blue sky over this particular piece of Misselthwaite seemed even more brilliant and soft than it was over the moor. The robin flew down from his tree-top and hopped about or flew after her from one bush to another. He chirped a good deal and had a very busy air, as if he were showing her things. Everything was strange and silent and she seemed to be hundreds of miles away from any one, but somehow she did not feel lonely at all. All that troubled her was her wish that she knew whether all the roses were dead, or if perhaps some of them had lived and might put out leaves and buds as the weather got warmer. She did not want it to be a quite dead garden. If it were a quite alive garden, how wonderful it would be, and what thousands of roses would grow on every side!

[...]

Plant Structure (Excerpt from www.biology4kids.com)

A GENERAL PLANT STRUCTURE

We're going to look at plant structure in this section. The plants we discuss will be vascular plants that have systems of tubes (xylem and phloem) for the transport of nutrients and water. Remember that there is a wide variety of plants on Earth and even a whole group that doesn't have **vascular systems**. Mosses and liverworts may still have photosynthesis, but they do not have that 'classic' plant structure. Then you will find species such as cacti that don't have leaves. They conduct **photosynthesis** in their stems. Anyway, just remember that there are many other possibilities in the plant kingdom.



ALTHOUGH MANY PLANTS HAVE
LEAVES, PHOTOSYNTHESIS
HAPPENS IN MANY PLACES.

ALIKE BUT DIFFERENT

We just told you about the many exceptions to the basic plant structure, so let's look at some similarities. An easy similarity is on a cellular level. Plants conduct photosynthesis. This process of converting the Sun's energy into molecular energy happens in chloroplasts with the help of chlorophyll molecules and a variety of enzymes. Vascular plants share a similar set of structures called roots, stems, and leaves. Many plants have specialized versions, but the basics are there. One specialization might be the petals of a flower. Those flower petals are specialized leaves that surround the reproductive structures of the plant.

THE ROOTS BELOW GROUND

We'll start at the bottom with the **roots**. These structures are designed to pull water and minerals from whatever material the plant sits on. For water plants, the roots may be in the water. For traditional trees, the roots go deep into the soil. There are even plants called epiphytes that live in trees and their root system clings to branches. Humans often capitalize on the roots of plants for food. Carrots are just one big orange root.

Root systems also provide support for plants in the form of an anchor in the soil. If the wind blows hard, those roots keep the plant from falling over. Some plant species have roots above ground that provide support for the entire plant. Roots are further broken down into the primary root and lateral roots that each has **apical meristem** at their tips. **Root hairs** are also a common structure on roots. They make the roots look fuzzy and help in the absorption of water and nutrients.

SHOOTS ABOVE GROUND

Sure we said that there are some roots above the surface, but the majority of the plant you see is made up of **stems** and **leaves**. Think about a tree. The stems are the trunks and branches. Leaves are self-explanatory. Stems are all about transporting food and water and acting as support structures. Leaves are all about photosynthesis, creating food molecules and absorbing carbon dioxide for the plant. These parts are connected by the vascular system of xylem and phloem that spreads through the entire plant.

The tip (**terminal bud**) of the main stem has a specialized structure that is the source of new growth for plants. You will find the apical meristem that develops into young leaves (**primodium**). There are other points of growth at each **node** where leaves and branches develop on the stems. Those branching points are home to **axillary buds** that can also develop into new branches.

Poetry

Blake, William. "The Echoing Green." *Songs of Innocence*. New York: Dover, 1971. (1789)

The sun does arise,
And make happy the skies;
The merry bells ring
To welcome the Spring;
The skylark and thrush,
The birds of the bush,
Sing louder around
To the bells' cheerful sound;
While our sports shall be seen
On the echoing green.

Old John, with white hair,
Does laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak,
Among the old folk.
They laugh at our play,
And soon they all say,
'Such, such were the joys
When we all—girls and boys—
In our youth-time were seen
On the echoing green.'

Till the little ones, weary,
No more can be merry:
The sun does descend,
And our sports have an end.
Round the laps of their mothers
Many sisters and brothers,
Like birds in their nest,
Are ready for rest,
And sport no more seen
On the darkening green.