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Created and produced by Julia Bruce,
Rachel Coombs, Nicholas Harris and Sarah Hartley,
Orpheus Books Ltd.

Text Steve Parker

Illustrated by Andrew Beckett, Fiammetta Dogi,
Betti Ferrero, Giuliano Fornari, Ray Grinaway,
Gary Hincks, Philip Hood, Inlink, Richard Tibbitts,
Debra Woodward, David Wright

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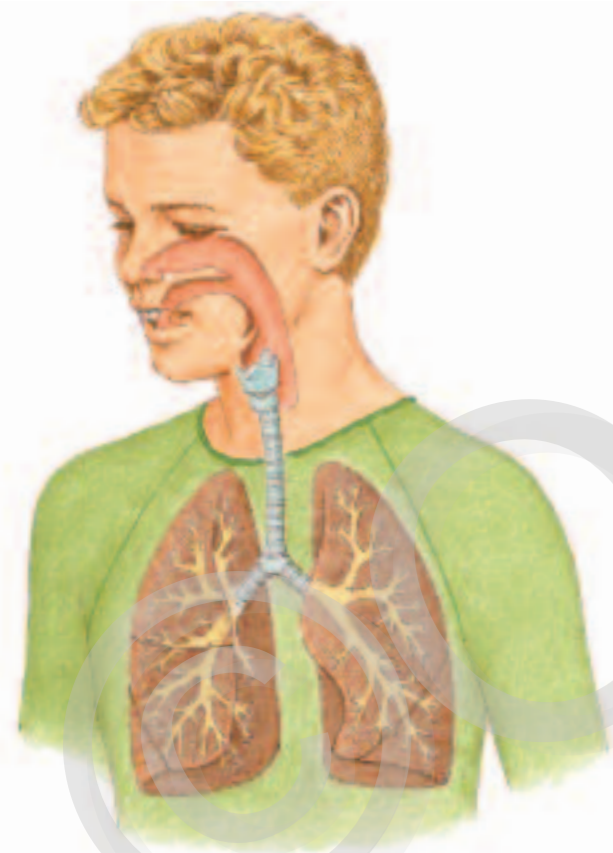
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INTRODUCTION

EVERYWHERE on our planet there is life: in the hottest desert or the coldest wastes, on the highest mountain or in the deepest ocean. You are one of billions of living things on Earth. This book tells you about the amazing variety of life, from microscopic viruses to gigantic trees, and how living things—including human beings—work.

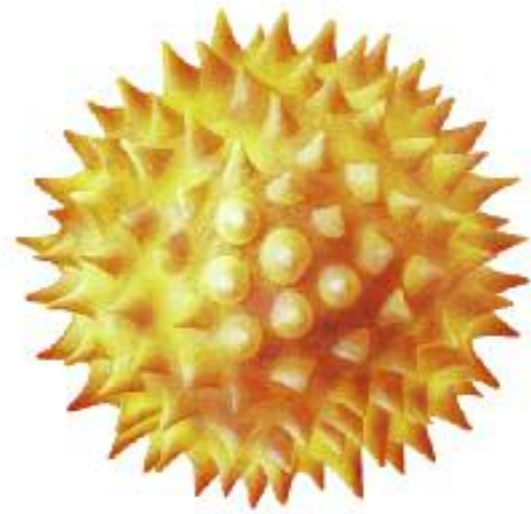


FLOWERS AND SEEDS

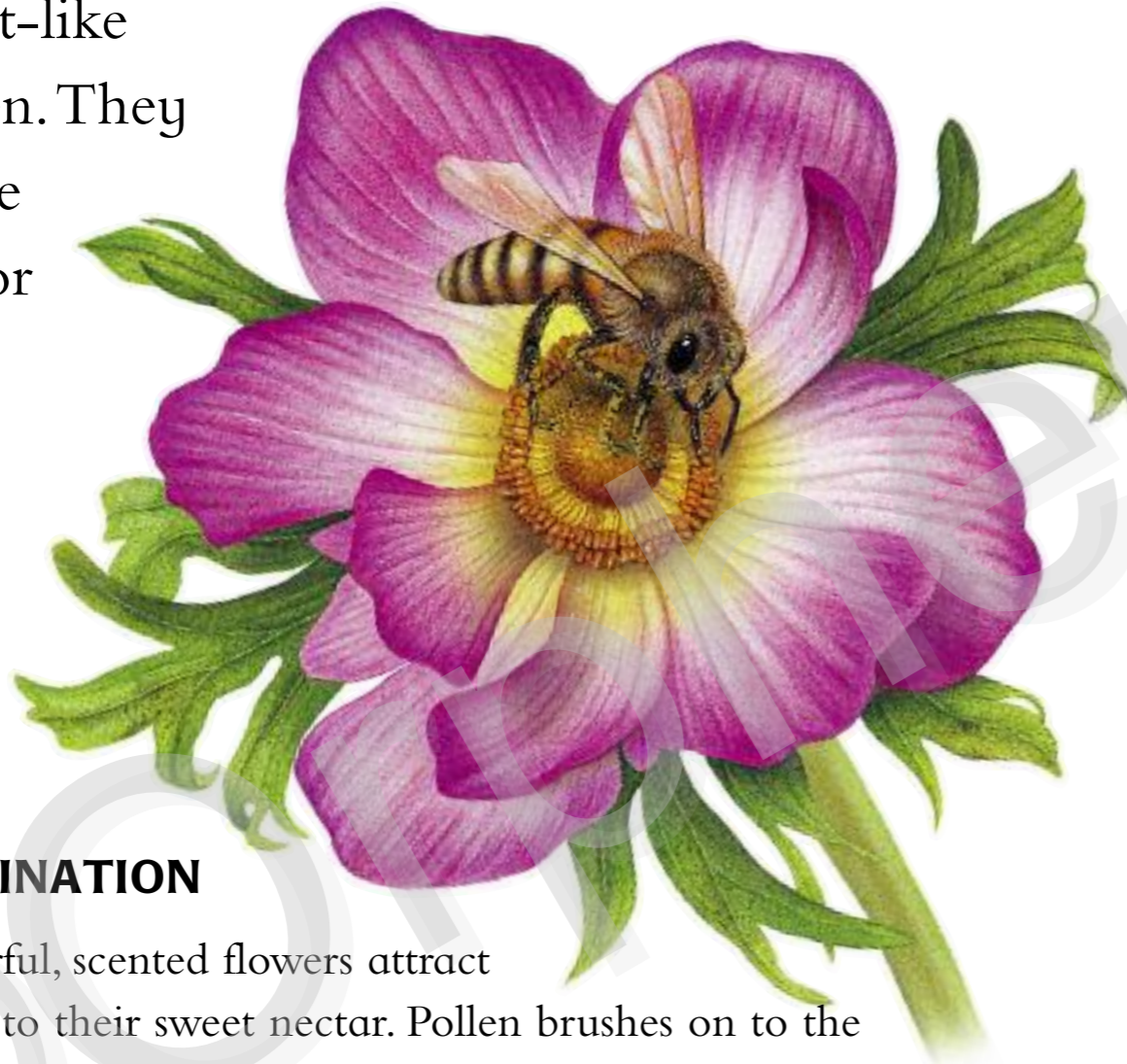
FLOWERS have male and female parts—sometimes on different flowers—which make seeds. The male parts, or stamens, make tiny dust-like grains of pollen. They must get to the female parts, or carpels, of a flower of the same kind. This is called pollination.

POLLINATION

Colourful, scented flowers attract insects to their sweet nectar. Pollen brushes on to the insect which it then carries to another flower's female parts. Dangling catkins use the wind to spread pollen.

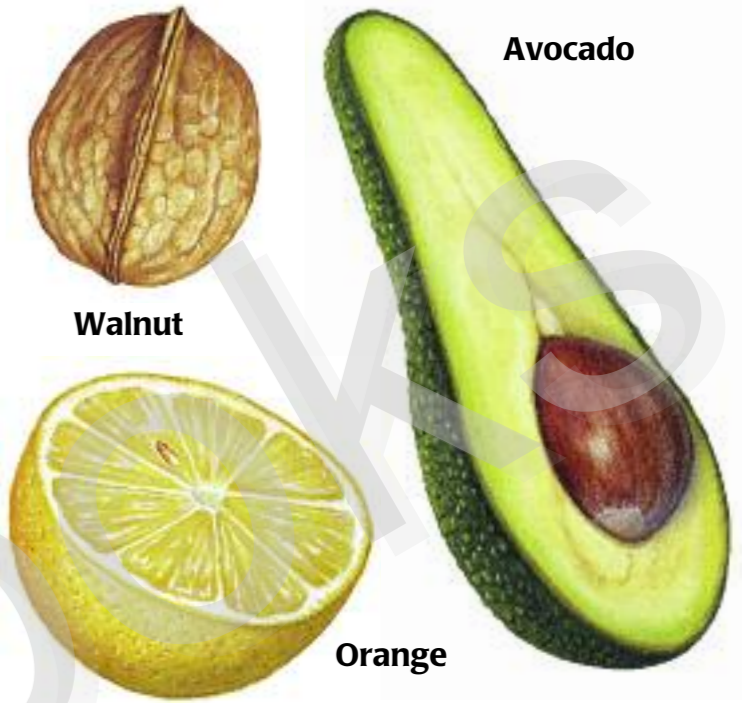


Some pollen grains have spikes or hooks to grip on to an animal's body. Pollen grains carried by the wind look like tiny balloons or parachutes.



SEEDS

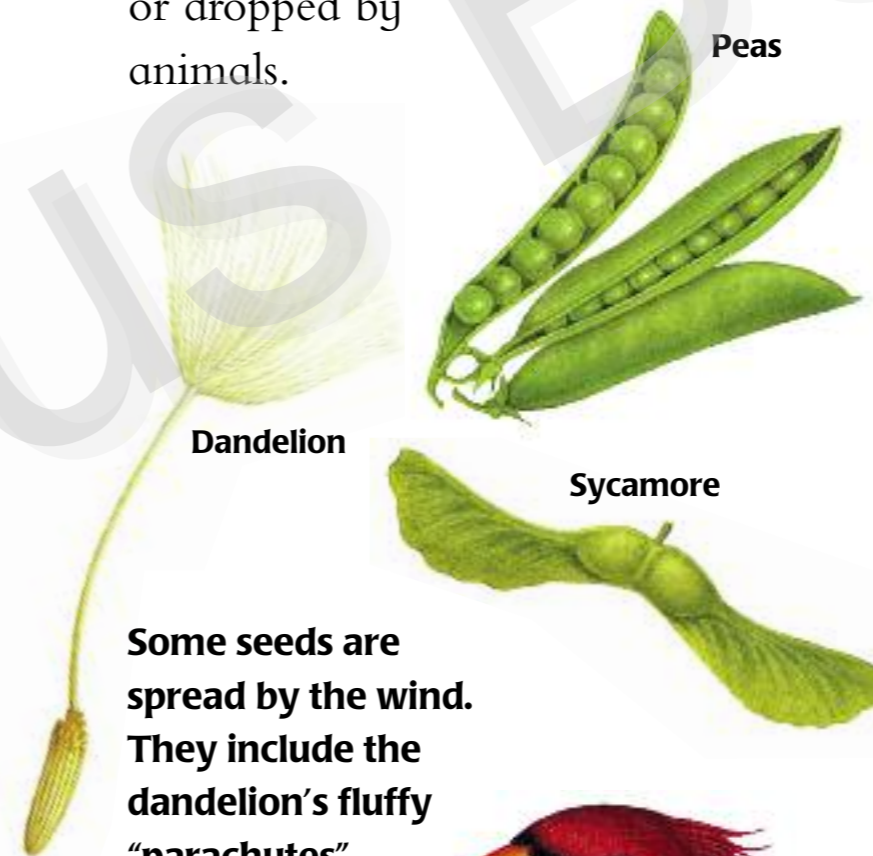
After the pollen arrives, the female parts of a flower can make their seeds. Some seeds are in tasty fruits, like pips in an orange, a nut's kernel, peas in a pod or an avocado's "stone". The tasty fruits attract animals. They eat the soft parts and discard the seed—or pass it out of their bodies in their faeces. Other seeds are scattered or dropped by animals.



Walnut

Avocado

Orange



Peas

Dandelion

Sycamore

Some seeds are spread by the wind. They include the dandelion's fluffy "parachutes" and the twirling wings of the sycamore seed. Other seeds may be carried by animals.



GROWING

A seed that reaches warm damp soil begins to grow or germinate. Its roots spread downwards. Its stem grows taller and it unfurls the first leaves.

