



March 2021

A Living Museum

What do you think of when you think of a museum? Most likely you picture art hanging on the walls, or hallways lined with interesting items. Many people are surprised to hear that Hidden Lake Gardens is a museum. Instead of hanging art, HLG displays plants from around the world.

The **conservatory** is full of plants that you won't find in Michigan. These plants would not be able to survive the winter in Michigan so they must be grown indoors. The conservatory allows us to control the temperature, sunlight, and water that each plant receives. This allows us to grow plants that you would normally have to travel a long way to see.

The **arid** room is full of **desert** plants. Desert plants must be able

to survive with very little water. These plants have thick, waxy leaves. Many of these cacti also have thorns. Thorns protect the plants from thirsty animals who might want to break the plant open to drink the water inside.

The **tropical** room looks drastically different from the arid room. Many of the plants have large leaves and grow very tall. These plants require much more water than plants in the arid room.

The conservatory is a living museum. Visitors can experience plants from around the world simply by walking from one room to another. Next time you walk through the conservatory, take time to look at the plant labels. These labels not only tell you the name of the plant, but they also tell you where the

plant is from. See how far you travel just by walking through the conservatory.

Think about it...

Why do we need a conservatory to grow plants from different parts of the world?

Definitions:

Conservatory: a room with a glass roof and walls

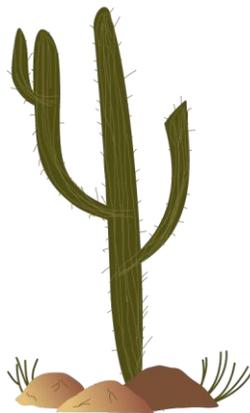
Arid: very dry

Desert: an area with little or no rain

Tropical: an area with enough rain and warm temperatures to support plants growing all year.

► Desert Plants

Circle the plant you would find in a desert



► Featured Plant: Barrel Cactus

The barrel cactus gets its name from the way that it grows. Barrel cacti are round in shape and grow about 2 feet tall, giving them a barrel-like look. The stems are covered in sharp spines to protect the plant.

They grow well in dry environments and can be found in the southwestern United States

and northern Mexico (Encyclopedia Britannica). The barrel cactus pictured below is the golden barrel cactus and is **native** to Mexico. This cactus is endangered in the wild, but can be found in our conservatory (Encyclopedia Britannica).

Native: a plant grows naturally in a particular area.



Photo by Samantha Howard



Photo by [CACTUSWAY](#)

► Featured Animal: Camel

Animals in the desert have adaptations that allow them to live in the hot, dry environment. Camels have many adaptations that allow them to live comfortably in the desert.

Food is limited in the desert, so camels have to eat cacti, such as the barrel cacti above. Camels have **papillae** in their mouth that help them swallow the thorns without damaging their mouth.

They also have special bacteria in their stomach to help digest cacti. Lastly, they can go long periods without eating. Many people think, a camel's hump stores water, but it actually stores fat. The camel can use this fat store as fuel when food is not available (CACTUSWAY).

Papillae: projections in the mouth that help to direct the needles down the camel's throat.

► Try at Home: Build Your Own Greenhouse

Supplies:

- **Recycled container with clear lid**
- **Soil**
- **Seeds**



Conservatory Scavenger Hunt Barrel Cactus



Plant from Brazil



Spring Flower



Panda Plant





► Contact Us

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Submit your coloring page for a chance to be featured in our next newsletter!

Please email a clear photo or color scan of your finished coloring sheet (including child's name and age) to Samantha Howard at howar279@msu.edu by March 20th.

► References

Encyclopedia Britannica. (2021). *Barrel cactus*. Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/plant/barrel-cactus>

CACTUSWAY. *Can Camels Eat Cactus? Everything You Need To Know About*. <https://cactusway.com/can-camels-eat-cactus-everything-you-need-to-know-about/>

