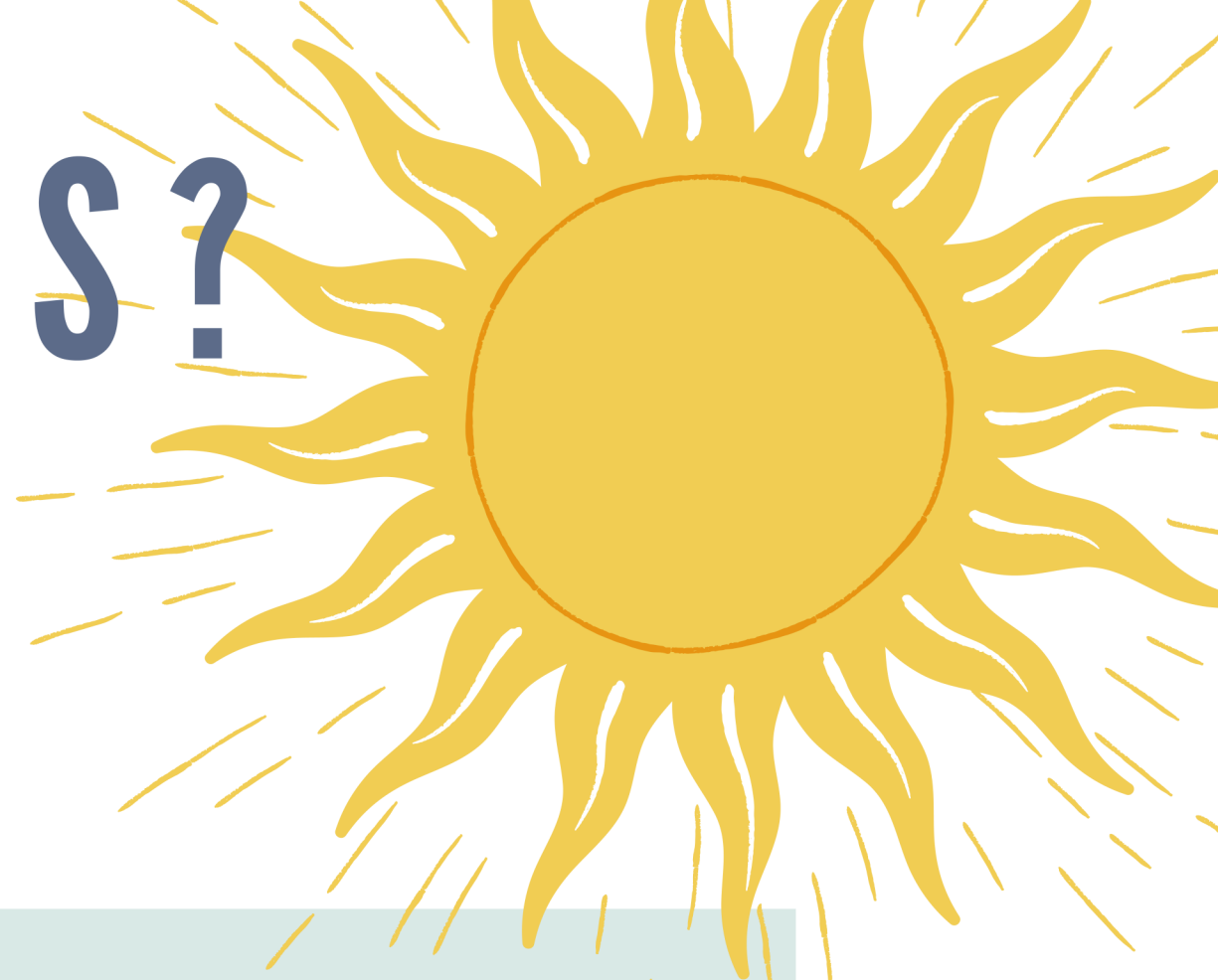


# WHAT IS A CACTUS?



These features will help you identify a cactus among many different kinds of plants!

## XERIC

Cacti are xeric plants, which means they do well in dry hot climates and have special adaptations for their environments. Waxy stems and reduced or absent leaves help them retain water.

## NO LEAVES

Cacti have evolved to not have leaves, in order to survive harsh or dry climates, as leaves often serve to relieve plants of moisture. Instead they photosynthesize in their stems. Additionally, Cacti have special nodes called Areoles, or 'spine-cushions' from where the needles grow. Only cacti grow these bumps.



## SPINES & THORNS

Cacti have special structures we call spines or thorns, and in addition to protecting the soft fleshy parts of the plant from being eaten by animals, the thorns often help shade the plant as well!

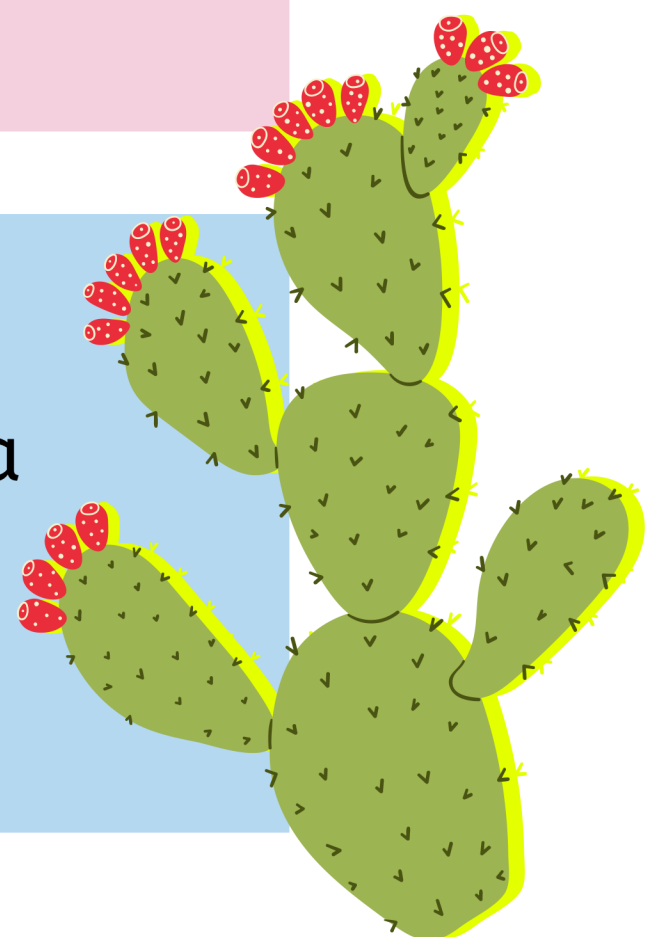


## FLOWER POWER

Cacti generally have large flowers compared to other kinds of succulent plants. Cacti flowers are often bowl-shaped and support pollinators like bats, butterflies and bees, though many other insects enjoy the nectar and pollen.

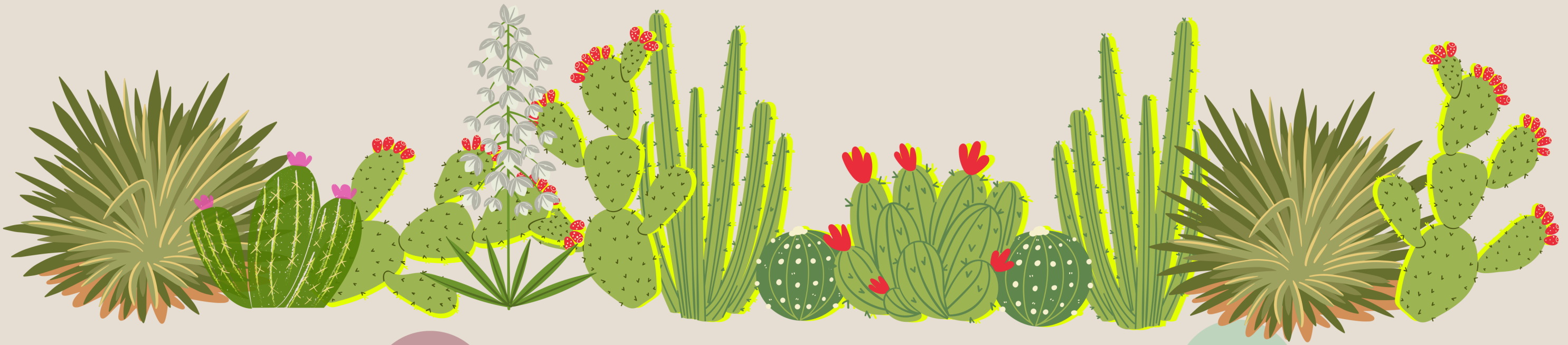
## FRUIT JUICE

Cacti reproduce with fruit containing seeds. Each fruit is an individual called a berry. Many animals consume these tasty fruits and help spread the seeds.





# So many Succulents!



1

## CACTUS VS. SUCCULENT

Many times people use the terms Cactus and Succulent interchangeably. The term Cactus, however, is a specific group of succulents with the special features listed on the other side of the page, like spines. Succulent plants extend across nearly 60 families of plants that store water and are found in dry or arid climates. These plants grow best in well draining soil, and do well in clay pots. They also like lots of sunshine and warm temperatures, though intense heat can still burn them!

3

## PRICKLY PEAR



The Prickly Pear is one of the most well known cactus. It's important as both the flowers, fruit and stems/pads are food sources for all kinds of animals, even people! The pad, or Nopal, can be eaten many ways, but you have to remove the spines! The fruit, or Tuna, is juicy and can be found at many grocery stores.

5

## AGAVE, YUCCA & SOTOL



While these native plants aren't cacti, they are technically succulents and have adapted for a variety of harsh climates. Yucca have several endemic varieties such as Twist-leaf, Buccley's, and the Red Yucca. Sotol can be found near by as well. While Agave aren't native to our area they are commonly used in landscaping.

2

## TASAJILLO

This native cactus can be hard to find despite being very common, as it often grows amongst other vegetation. It's branches are long and thin, and it's sometimes called 'Pencil Cactus'. It also makes bright red fruit, giving it another name, 'Christmas cactus'.



4

## LACE CACTUS, MAMMILLARIA, HEYDERS & PINEAPPLE!

There are a good handful of native cacti around San Antonio, though you may be hard pressed to find them in areas that are very developed, as they grow best in natural terrain. The Lace cactus [top right] is covered in thorns that give shade to it's stem. The Mammillaria group of cactus [right middle] includes lots of cactus, like Heyder's Cactus [below], and the Pineapple cactus is another native species that wears it's name well [bottom right].





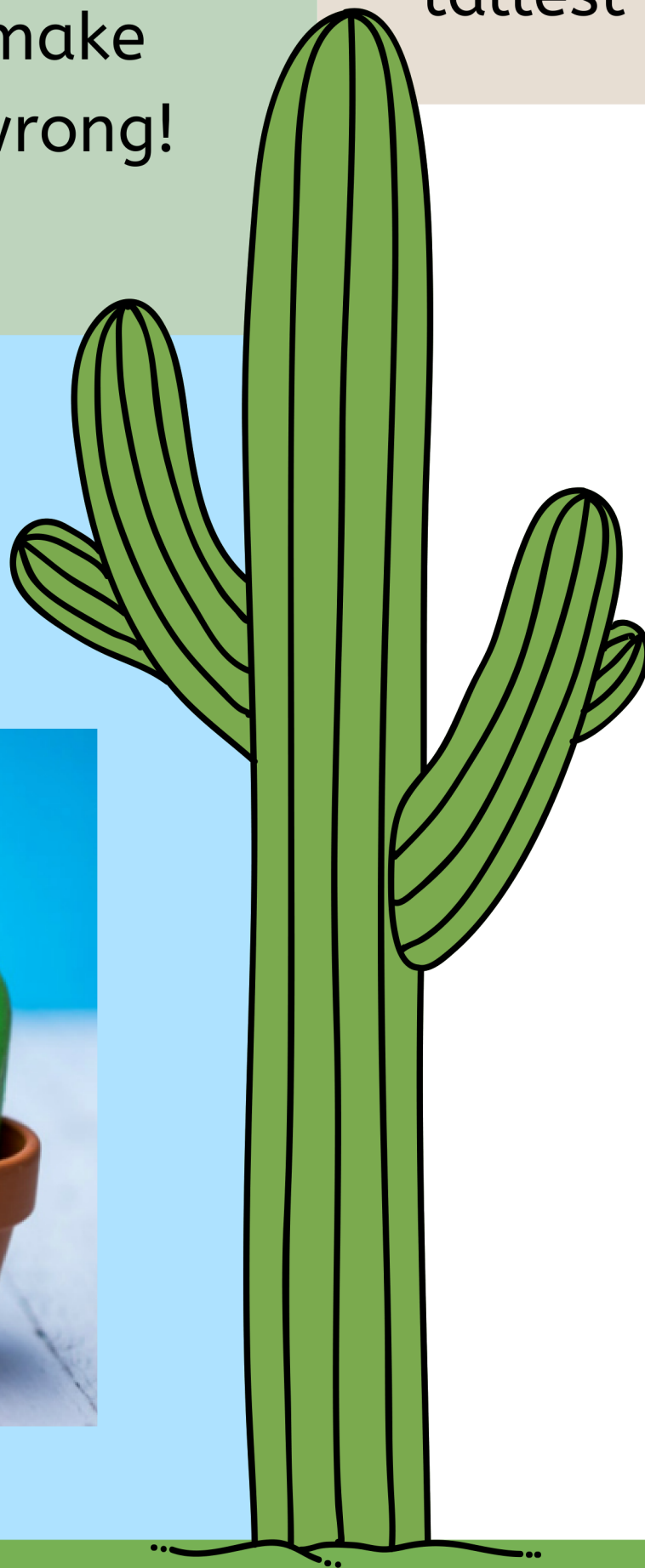
# CRAFTY CACTUS IDEAS

## CACTUS COME IN MANY SHAPES

Cacti grow in all kinds of shapes, from completely **smooth** and **round** to **long** and **ridged**. They can be **branched** or have a **single stem**. When you make your own cactus, you can't go wrong!

## CACTUS COME IN MANY SIZES

Cacti can range from a few inches tall, to 12 meters tall! The great Saguaro cactus can live for 200 years and grows very slowly, reaching a foot tall at about 13 years of age. The tallest recorded saguaro was 78 feet tall!



## PEBBLE CACTUS



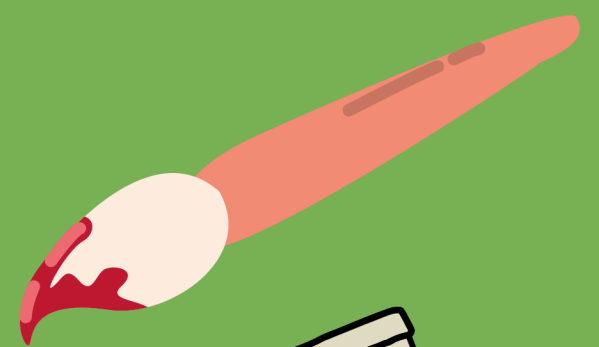
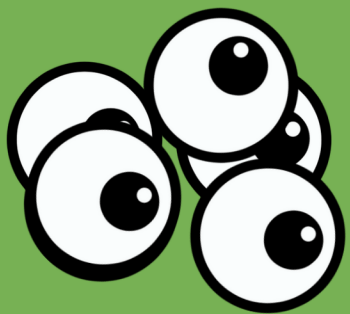
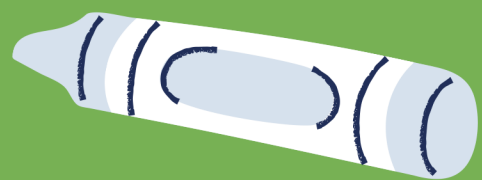
## PAPER CACTUS



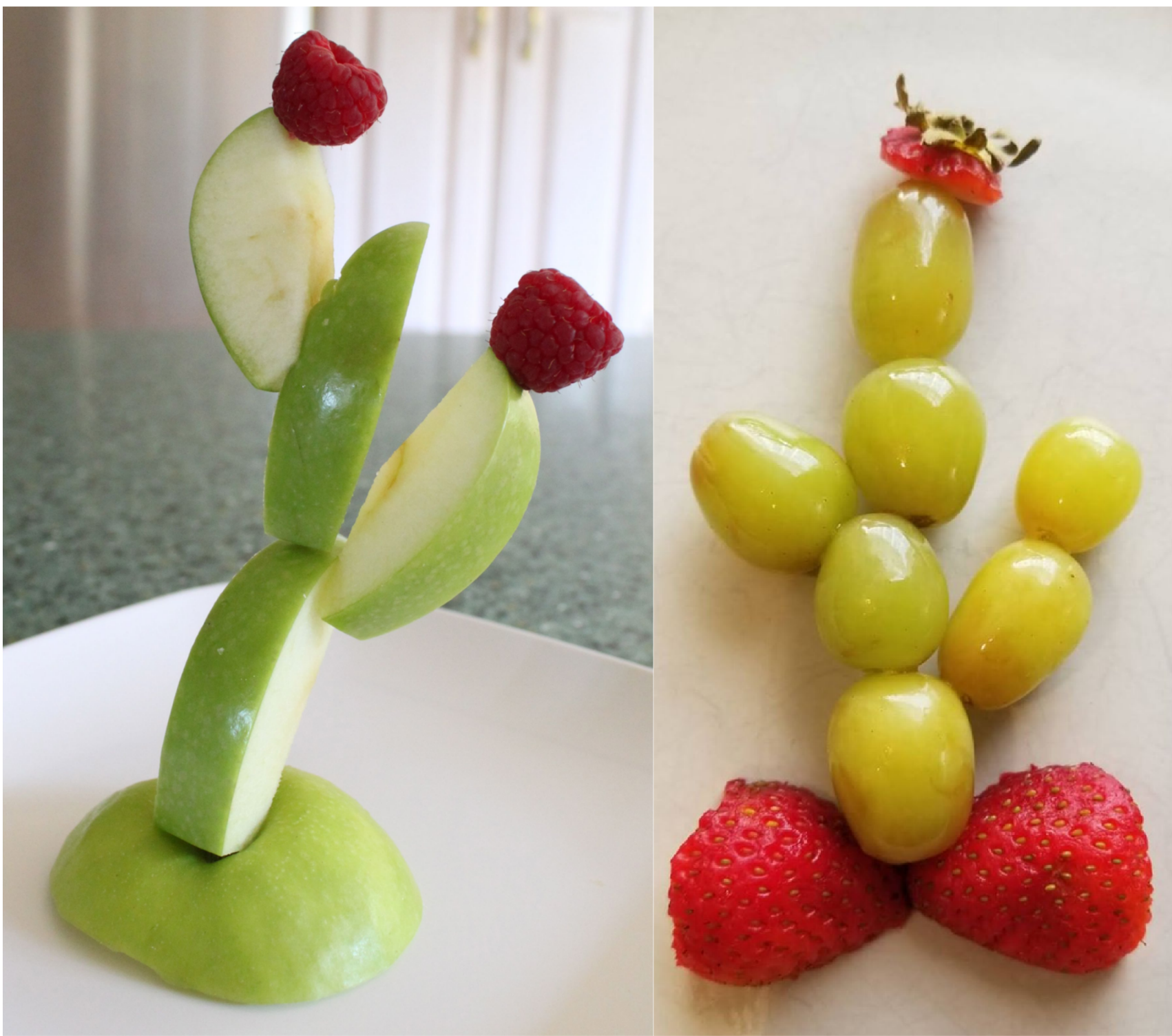
## MATERIALS:

For the pebble cactus, find a nice smooth round rock. Use green and white paint to decorate it.

For the paper cactus, try tracing your hand, but any shape will do! Add some eyes for a bit of fun!

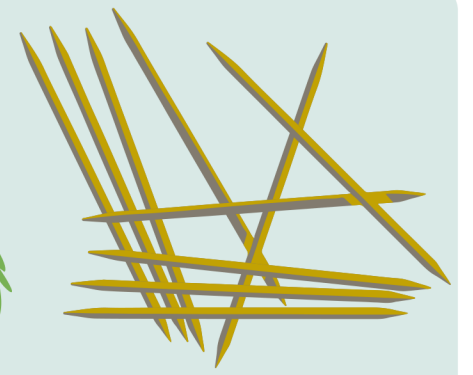
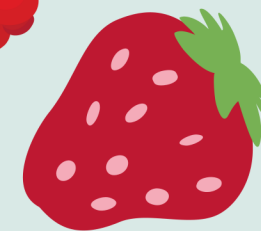
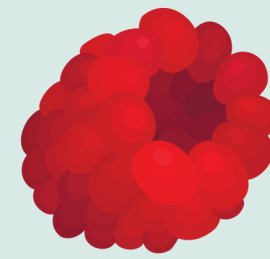
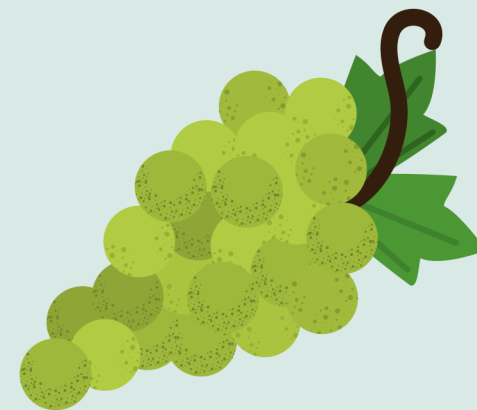
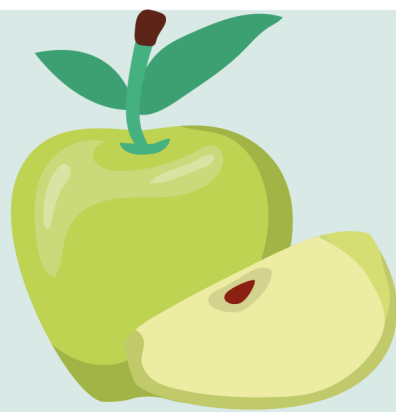






HOW TO MAKE A  
**CACTUS**  
FRUIT SNACK!

**INGREDIENTS:**



**DIRECTIONS: THIS CACTUS SNACK IS SIMPLE!  
FIRST, AN ADULT WILL SLICE THE APPLE INTO  
WEDGES.**

**THEN, THE FUN PART IS USING THE  
TOOTHPICKS TO CONNECT THE FRUIT PIECES,  
YOU'LL BUILD YOUR CACTUS!**

**TRY RED FRUIT LIKE BERRIES TO REPRESENT  
THE FLOWERS AND FRUIT OF THE CACTUS!**