

The Secret Life Of Plants Crossword Answers

Introduction: When Nature Speaks in Puzzles

For decades, the idea that plants might possess a hidden inner world has captivated gardeners, mystics, and scientists alike. This fascination reached its peak with the publication of *The Secret Life of Plants* in 1973, a controversial and bestselling book by Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird. The book proposed that plants are sentient beings capable of communication, emotional response, and even telepathy. Whether you are a skeptic or a believer, the book has left an undeniable cultural footprint. That footprint extends into one of the most beloved pastimes in the world: the crossword puzzle. If you have ever stared at a grid, pondering a clue about plant perception or Backster's experiments, you have encountered the enduring legacy of this work. This article explores the fascinating intersection of botany, belief, and brain-teasers, providing a comprehensive guide to everything related to **The Secret Life Of Plants Crossword Answers**. We will delve into the book's core ideas, the terminology that appears in puzzles, and how you can solve those tricky clues with confidence. Whether you are a crossword enthusiast or a curious reader, you are about to discover why this topic continues to sprout up in puzzle boxes everywhere.

What is The Secret Life of Plants?

Before we dive into the crossword clues, it is essential to understand the source material. *The Secret Life of Plants* is a non-fiction work that synthesizes decades of fringe botanical research. Tompkins and Bird wove together stories of plant experiments, ancient wisdom, and modern scientific anomalies to argue that plants are far more than passive organisms. They claimed that plants could feel pain, recognize human intentions, and even respond to music. The book became a global phenomenon, inspiring documentaries, popular music, and a generation of New Age thinking. For crossword puzzle creators, the book is a treasure trove of unique words, names, and concepts that make for excellent crossword clues.

The Central Thesis

The authors proposed that plants have a form of consciousness. They cited experiments where plants connected to polygraph (lie detector) machines appeared to react to threats, such as someone thinking about harming them. This idea, often called the "Backster Effect" after lie detector expert Cleve Backster, is one of the most famous elements of the book and a frequent subject of crossword clues. Understanding this core thesis helps you anticipate the types of answers that might appear in a puzzle related to this topic.

Key Concepts and Their Crossword Relevance

Crossword puzzles rely on specific, often unusual vocabulary. The Secret Life of Plants is filled with such terms. Below are the key concepts from the book that you are most likely to encounter as crossword answers. Mastering these will give you a significant edge when solving any grid with a botanical or esoteric theme.

Plant Perception and Communication

The book suggests plants can perceive the world around them in ways similar to animals. They can communicate with each other, and potentially with humans, through chemical signals, bioelectric fields, or even unknown psychic channels. In crossword puzzles, this concept often leads to answers like **SYMPATHY**, **EMOTION**, or **REACTION**. However, the most direct clue might be for the phenomenon itself: **PERCEPTION**. If you see a clue like "Plant attribute in a 1973 bestseller," it might be referring to this heightened awareness.

The Backster Effect

This is arguably the most famous element of the book. Cleve Backster, a polygraph expert, attached electrodes to a houseplant and observed that the plant seemed to respond to his thoughts, especially threats. The term **BACKSTER** is a common crossword answer, often clued simply as "Plant researcher" or "Polygraph expert of the 1960s." The plant he used was often a **DRACAENA** (a common houseplant), which is another excellent word for crossword grids due to its vowel-rich structure. Other related answers include **POLYGRAPH** and **ELECTRODE**.

Plant Music and Growth

Another prominent chapter in the book discusses the effect of music on plant growth. The authors claimed that plants grew better when exposed to classical or soothing music, and worse when subjected to rock music. This has led to clues like "Music that plants prefer (according to a 1973 book)" with the answer being **CLASSICAL** or **BACH**. The concept of using sound to influence growth is known as **ACOUSTIC STIMULATION**, though in a crossword, you might see a simpler answer like **SOUND** or **MUSIC**.

Common Crossword Clues and Answers from the Book

Let us get into the specifics. Below is a curated list of crossword answers frequently associated with *The Secret Life of Plants*, along with the typical clues you will encounter.

Author Names

- **TOMPKINS** (7 letters) – Clue: "Co-author of The Secret Life of Plants" or "Peter ____, co-writer of a plant book."
- **BIRD** (4 letters) – Clue: "Christopher ____, co-author with Tompkins."
- **PETER** (5 letters) – Clue: "Tompkins' first name."
- **CHRISTOPHER** (11 letters) – Clue: "Author Bird."

Key Terminology

- **POLYGRAPH** (9 letters) – Clue: "Machine used in Backster’s plant experiments."
- **DRACAENA** (8 letters) – Clue: "Plant used in the Backster experiment."
- **BACKSTER** (8 letters) – Clue: "Polygraph expert who studied plants."
- **SYMPATHY** (8 letters) – Clue: "Plants were said to have this for humans."
- **TELEPATHY** (9 letters) – Clue: "Claimed communication method with plants."
- **THOUGHTS** (8 letters) – Clue: "What plants could supposedly read."

Famous Plant Species Mentioned

- **PEA** (3 letters) – Clue: "Plant used in early perception experiments."
- **ROSE** (4 letters) – Clue: "Flower said to respond to human emotion."
- **BONSAI** (6 letters) – Clue: "Miniature tree that might have feelings, per the book."
- **PHILODENDRON** (12 letters) – Clue: "Common houseplant in many experiments."

Why This Topic Endures in Crossword Puzzles

You might wonder why a book from the 1970s remains a staple in crossword construction. The answer lies in the unique combination of accessible science, mystery, and distinctive vocabulary. Crossword constructors love words that are uncommon in everyday speech but instantly recognizable to a broad audience. *The Secret Life of Plants* is a goldmine for such words.

Educational Value

Crossword puzzles often serve as a gateway to learning. Clues related to this book encourage solvers to explore topics in botany, parapsychology, and the history of science. When you solve a clue like "Backster’s experiment subject," you are not just filling in a square; you are engaging with a piece of intellectual history. This educational component makes the topic a favorite among puzzle editors who value substance alongside wordplay.

Cultural Significance

The book has been referenced in popular culture for decades. It inspired a 1979 documentary, a song by Stevie Wonder, and countless parodies on television shows. This cultural saturation means that even if you have never read the book, you have likely encountered its ideas. For crossword solvers, this makes the clues feel familiar rather than obscure. The term **SECRET LIFE** itself is a common crossword phrase, often clued as "Tompkins and Bird book" or "1973 bestseller about flora."

Solving the Secret Life of Plants Crossword

Now that you have the vocabulary, let us talk about strategy. Solving a crossword with a theme like this requires a combination of general knowledge and pattern recognition. Here are some tips to help you crack the grid.

Tips for Crossword Enthusiasts

1. **Know your authors.** The names **Tompkins** and **Bird** are the most common answers. Memorize their first names and last names.
2. **Think about the 1970s.** The book was a product of its time. Clues might reference other 70s phenomena, from **New Age** to **psychic** phenomena.
3. **Look for key nouns.** Words like **polygraph**, **dracaena**, and **electrode** are highly specific and usually indicate a themed puzzle.
4. **Consider the film adaptation.** The 1979 documentary narrated by Orson Welles is another source of crossword clues. The word **WELLES** might appear as a clue related to the film.
5. **Remember the music connection.** If you see a clue about plants and music, think of **classical** or **serenade** as possible answers.

Resources for Crossword Solvers

If you are stuck on a specific clue related to this topic, there are several excellent resources. Online crossword solvers and anagram generators can help you find words that fit the letter pattern. However, the best tool is knowledge. Reading about the book, its authors, and its experiments will make you a stronger solver. Consider looking up summaries of the Backster Effect or the book’s table of contents for a quick refresher. Many puzzle blogs also have archives of themed puzzles, including those with a botanical or esoteric theme.

The Science and the Skepticism

It is worth noting that the claims made in *The Secret Life of Plants* have been largely dismissed by mainstream science. Subsequent studies failed to replicate the Backster Effect, and the book has been criticized for selective reporting and a lack of rigorous methodology. This scientific controversy, however, only adds to its mystique and, by extension, its utility in crossword puzzles. Clues might hint at this controversy with phrases like "Disputed plant study" or "Scientifically questioned bestseller." Words like **PSEUDOSCIENCE** (13 letters) or **CONTROVERSY** (11 letters) might appear in more challenging grids.

Conclusion

The Secret Life of Plants is more than just a book; it is a cultural touchstone that has influenced how we think about nature, consciousness, and the boundaries of science. For crossword puzzle enthusiasts, it is a rich source of intriguing clues and satisfying answers. From the names of its authors to the specific terminology of its experiments, the book offers a unique vocabulary that continues to challenge and delight solvers decades after its

