

Florida
State Parks

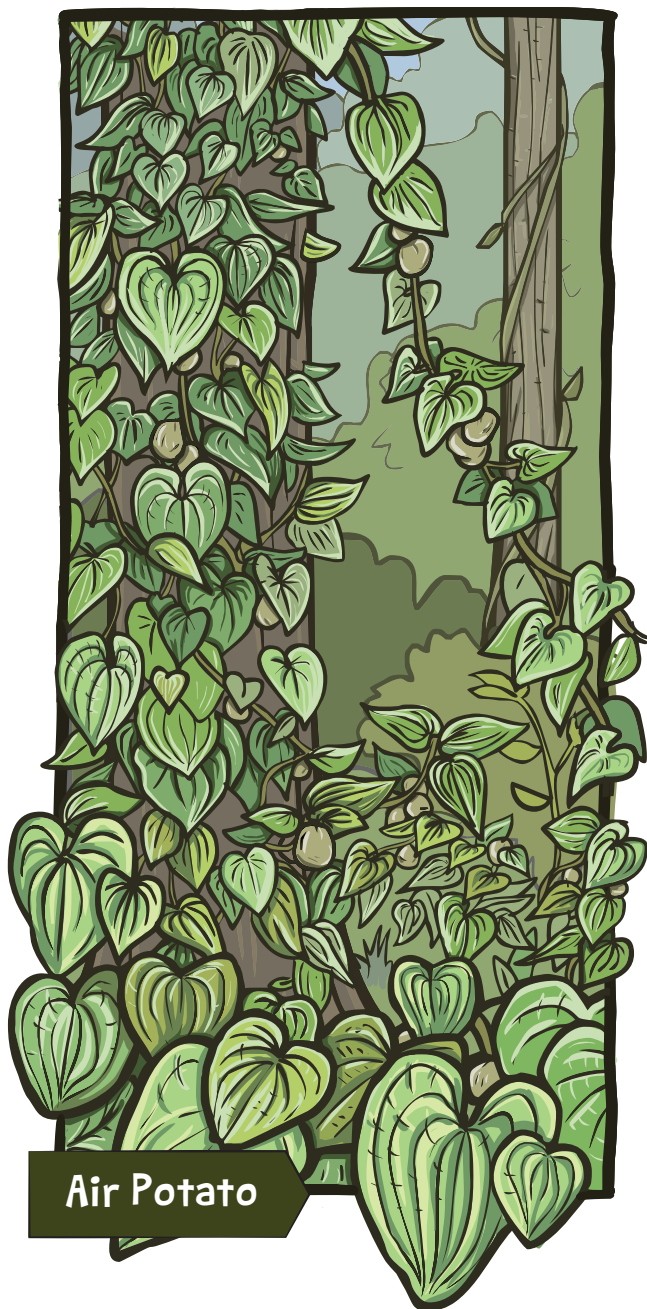
10

 JUNIOR
RANGER

PROBLEM PLANTS

Name _____

Date _____ Park _____


Air Potato

Did you know plants have been moving their seeds for thousands of years? Some seeds travel by drifting in the wind, floating in the **water** or riding inside the stomachs or on the outside of animals. Even people help move plants and seeds from one place to another. Seed **dispersal** is the name given to the different ways seeds travel.

Plants growing in Florida long before people discovered this land are called **native** plants. Plants brought by animals or people to Florida, which did not already grow here naturally, are called **exotic** plants.

Some exotic plants try to live in the same place as the native plants. They **compete** with native plants for the same food, water and space to grow. The place they are fighting over is a **habitat**. When these exotic plants **invade** the habitat, they crowd out the native plants.

There may not then be enough room or favorite foods for the **wildlife** living in the habitat. The native plants and animals must find a different place to live if they want to survive.

We try to protect the native plants and wildlife in the **Florida** State Parks. As a Junior **Ranger**, you can help us by teaching others that planting exotic plants can hurt our native plants and animals.

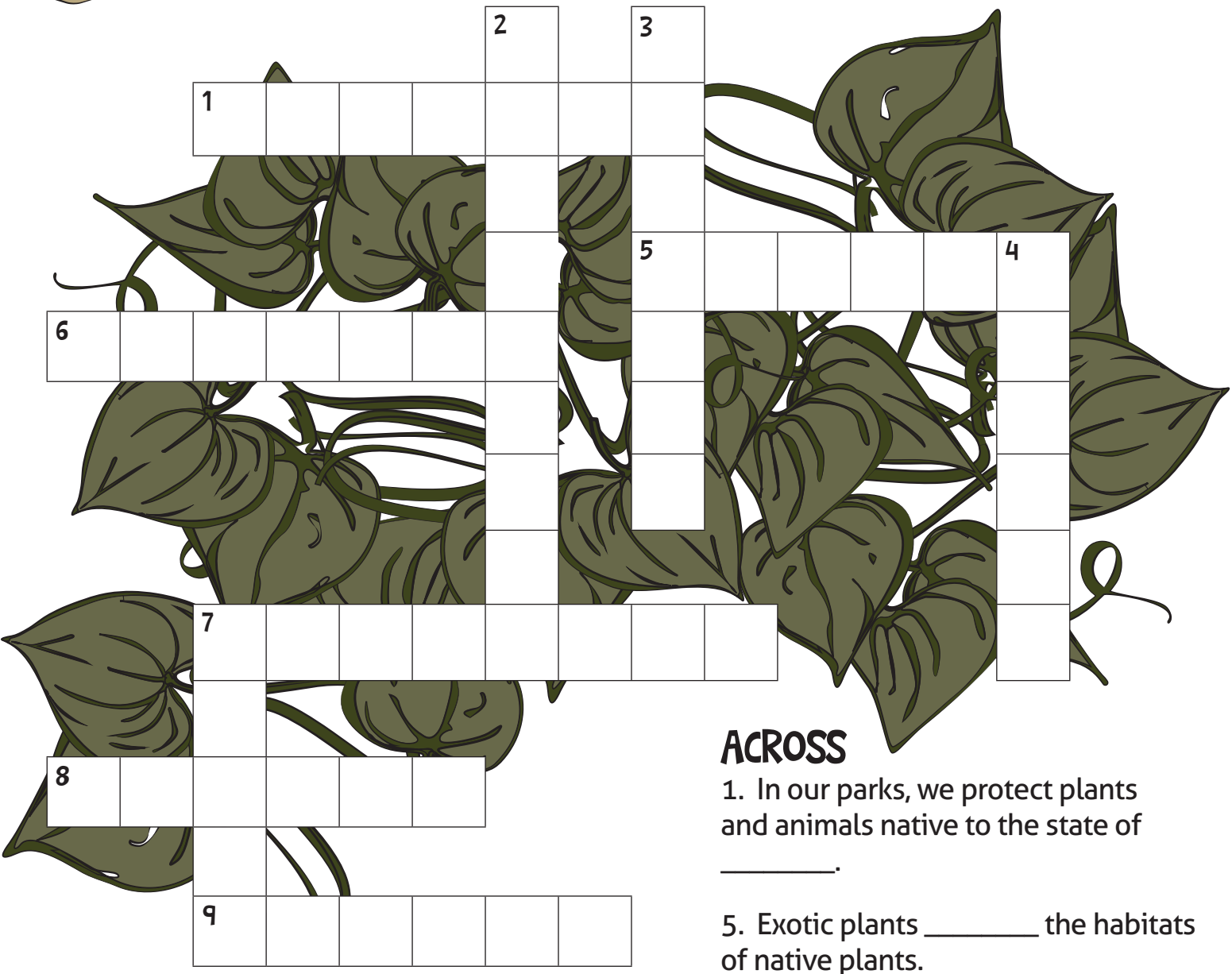
The air potato is an example of an invasive exotic plant. It grows quickly and its climbing vines can smother native plants in Florida's state parks and natural areas. There are many different ways trained park staff and volunteers try to control and stop invasive plants, such as removal by hand and safe chemical treatments.





PROBLEM PLANTS

On the previous page you read about problem plants. Did you notice the words in bold? Use them to complete the crossword puzzle.



DOWN

- 2. The way seeds travel is called seed _____.
- 3. When exotic plants invade an area, they can destroy the _____.
- 4. Plants which did not already naturally grow here before are called _____.
- 7. Seeds travel by wind, on animals or float in the _____.

ACROSS

- 1. In our parks, we protect plants and animals native to the state of _____.
- 5. Exotic plants _____ the habitats of native plants.
- 6. Exotic plants _____ with native plants for the same habitat.
- 7. Habitats are places where plants and _____ live.
- 8. Plants which were here before people discovered Florida are called _____ plants.
- 9. A Junior _____ can help teach others about the dangers of exotic plants.