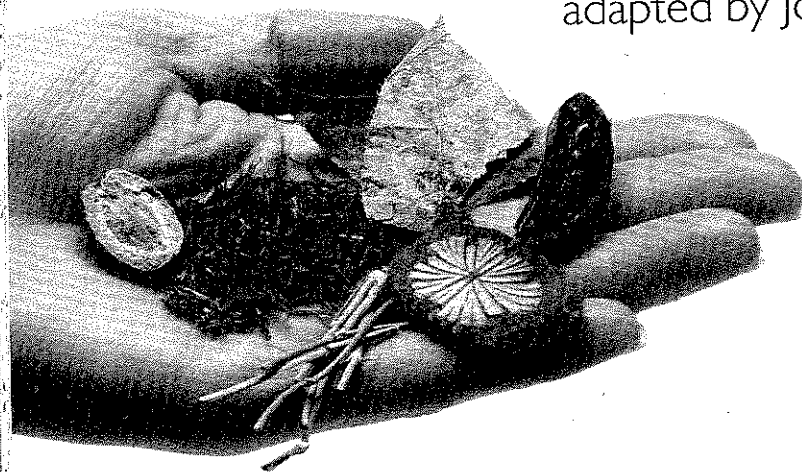


Rain-Forest Medicines

adapted by Jocelyn Piro



Set Your Purpose

Read this article to find out about medicines that come from rain forests.

A young boy is crying because his ear hurts. Then a man comes out of the forest. He carries some juice from a white fungus plant. Carefully, he drips the juice into the boy's ear. In some rain-forest villages of South America, that's how earaches are **cured!**

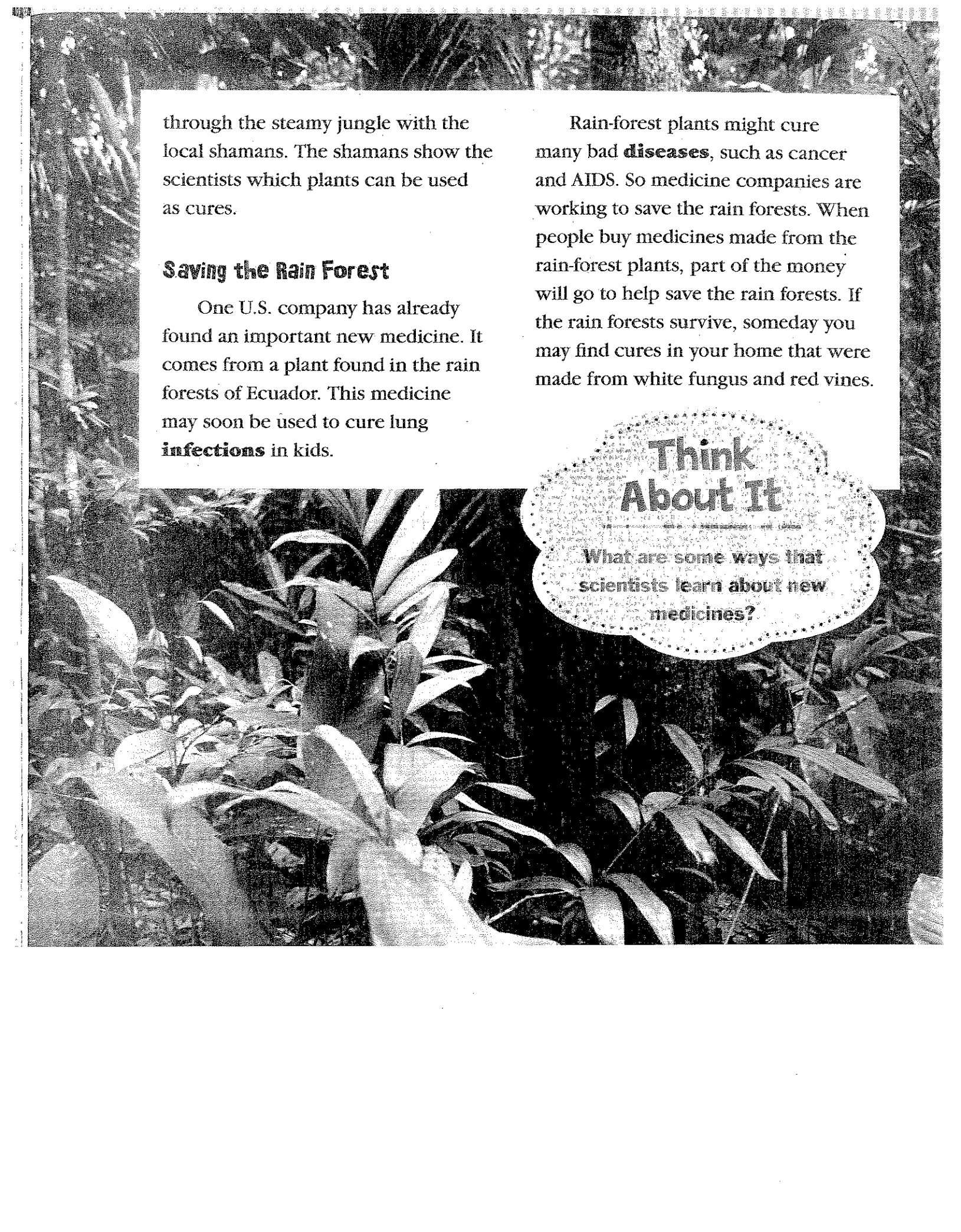
Rain-forest doctors, called shamans (SHAH-manz), use many kinds of plants as medicine. They make tea from one type of red vine. It cures stomachaches. Yellow flowers from another plant are used to treat snakebite. **Local** shamans have used the curing power of plants for thousands of years.

Learning from the Shamans

Today, scientists from all over the world want to learn what these shamans know about plant medicines. They are racing to find the secrets of the rain forest before the plants disappear for good. And the rain forests are disappearing fast. Every year, people cut down an area of rain forest as large as Florida. Sometimes they want to use the land for farms. Sometimes they cut down the trees and sell the wood.

Now the scientists travel by boat, air, and foot to tiny rain-forest villages. Then they spend long hours **trudging**





through the steamy jungle with the local shamans. The shamans show the scientists which plants can be used as cures.

Saving the Rain Forest

One U.S. company has already found an important new medicine. It comes from a plant found in the rain forests of Ecuador. This medicine may soon be used to cure lung **infections** in kids.

Rain-forest plants might cure many bad **diseases**, such as cancer and AIDS. So medicine companies are working to save the rain forests. When people buy medicines made from the rain-forest plants, part of the money will go to help save the rain forests. If the rain forests survive, someday you may find cures in your home that were made from white fungus and red vines.

Think About It

What are some ways that scientists learn about new medicines?

Name _____

Date _____

Check Your Understanding

Fill in the letter with the best answer for each question.

- What is the main idea of the first two paragraphs in this selection?
 - Shamans can cure earaches.
 - You can make tea from a red vine.
 - There are rain forests in South America.
 - Important medicines come from rain forests.
- What is the main idea of "Learning from the Shamans" and "Saving the Rain Forest"?
 - Scientists want to learn about rain-forest medicine before the plants disappear.
 - Shamans are learning from scientists, and scientists are learning from shamans.
 - Shamans are opening new schools.
 - Scientists are destroying the rain forest.
- Choose the detail that supports this idea: Shamans use many plants as medicine.
 - Medicine companies are working to save the rain forests.
 - Rain forests are rapidly disappearing.
 - Yellow flowers from one plant are used to treat snakebite.
 - One U.S. company has already found an important new medicine.
- An important new medicine from a plant in the Ecuadorean rain forests may soon be used to
 - ask for more government money.
 - fight lung illnesses in young children.
 - help rain forests survive.
 - make local shamans more effective.
- Another good title for the article is
 - Jungle Cures.
 - Snakebite Remedies.
 - Buying Medicines.
 - The Rain Forest Is Disappearing.

Vocabulary

Find each vocabulary word in the selection. The words and sentences around it will help you figure out its meaning.

Fill in the letter with the best definition of the underlined word.

- Earaches are sometimes cured by dripping plant juice into the ear.
 - caught
 - made better
 - caused
 - invented
- Local rain-forest doctors use the curing power of plants.
 - loud
 - nearby
 - worldwide
 - room
- Scientists spend long hours trudging through the jungle.
 - waltzing
 - jogging
 - walking with effort
 - jumping quickly
- Lung infections in kids are cured by a special medicine.
 - candies
 - cuts, bruises
 - inspections
 - sicknesses caused by germs
- Rain-forest plants might cure many bad diseases.
 - illnesses
 - dislikes
 - medicines
 - habits

Name _____ Date _____

Word Work

A **compound word** is made of two shorter words. To understand a compound word, separate it into the two shorter words and think about the meaning of those words.

ear + ache = earache

Read the definitions below. Join two words from each definition to make a compound word that fits the definition. Write the word. Look at the sample.

SAMPLE definition: the **top** of a **tree**
compound word: **treetop**

Definitions

1. an ache in the head _____
2. a book that tells how to cook _____
3. the skin of a snake _____
4. the light of the sun _____
5. the bell by a door _____

Write Now

In "Rain-Forest Medicines," you read about a lot of interesting things scientists are learning about rain-forest plants. Pretend you are a news reporter who is assigned to write a news story about a new medicine found in a rain forest.

- Plan to write a news story. First, make a list of questions you think people would want answered. In their news stories, reporters always try to answer the questions in the chart above.
- Write a news story about the new rain-forest medicine. Write a newspaper headline, or title, for your article. Remember that reporters need to say a lot in a few words. A reporter usually states the main idea in the first few sentences. Additional details are given in the rest of the news story.

Look at the compound words below. Write the word that best completes each sentence. Then draw a line between the two shorter words that make up the compound word.

notebook treetops earache
rattlesnake backpack

6. This rain-forest medicine can cure an _____.
7. Monkeys live in the _____.
8. An angry _____ can be very dangerous.
9. The scientist wrote notes in her _____.
10. She carried her materials in her _____.

Who?	Who discovered the plant?
What?	What did the plant look like?
Where?
When?
Why?
How?