

TEN THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT LISTS

It's barely possible to wrap your greasy eyes around a newspaper without being force-fed a titillating mille-feuille of list-based articles. Like the Ouroboros devouring his own tail, we have created a list about lists.

- The first list may have been created inside the mind of a hen. It has been proven that hens have the ability to count up to six.
- The word 'list' has an English Gematria value of 360, the same number as degrees in a circle. Gematria is an Assyro-Babylonian system of numerology that assigns a number to a word. Words of the same value are linked in mysterious ways.
- Due to a misreading of his 'bucket list', the wife of Harold Ochon tried to arrange for him to go swimming with the action star Dolph Lundgren. Ochon had actually wanted to go 'swimming with dolphins'.
- Franz Liszt was a 19th century Hungarian composer (and heart-throb) who frequently played so hard he broke his piano strings.
- The world's shortest list contains only one item.
- Over 89,000 list-based articles have been published online in the last 8 years.
- The world's most achievable 'bucket list' was created by William Hilldiger of New York. It included his wish to buy some paperclips.
- King Simologh's list of his most treasured items included a bejeweled turtle and pyjamas made from spider silk.
- The three most frequently included items on 'things-to-do' lists are:
 - Tidy
 - Exercise
 - Phone family
- The 7th century scholar Ramasu Turanbu sought to list everything he had ever seen or could conceive of. He got bored after listing 23 items which included his chamberpot, his wife's wart and his dachshund, "Twinkle".

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR CUCUMBER

TIP N° 4

Build up a strong rapport with your cucumber by going on an adventure holiday together.

SORELY-NEEDED NEW WORDS

Have you ever reached out for the right word and it wasn't there? We will fill your flapper-cating mouth with the correct word for any situation and save you from the misery of the 'soup-gaze'.



SOLIPAMORIST (noun)
A Solipamorist has the naive notion that she alone sees the great beauty of the object of her desire.



PANDAGHAST (adjective)
Filled with horror by the sudden appearance of a panda.



SNUBLICATION (noun)
A book on the shelf that you will never get around to reading.



SCRANIAL (noun)
A repeatedly unfulfilled promise to leave the computer and get to bed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CLASSIFIEDS

ODD JOBS

INDIVIDUAL CAPABLE OF PEDALING MASSIVE CUCUMBER GARNISHING DEVICE the size of a double decker bus. Requires noteworthy fitness level, an eagerness to work long hours and a valid passport. **☛ ROSEHALL 21**

SKILLED TWEED WORKERS for a project involving a burly chap who insists on layering. **☛ CLYDE 31C**

THIRTEENTH FLOOR ELEVATOR GREETER, must be charming. **☛ ORVIS 12**

SOOTHSAYER for insights around salmon fishing, the bond market and juniper futures. Must be able to present bad news in an agreeable obtuse manner. **☛ DINGWALL 21C**

FISH HOLDER FOR PORTRAIT ARTIST specializing in perch and haddock. Candidates must have steady hands and below-average nasal skills. **☛ PORIN 765**

TRANSLATOR PROFICIENT IN PUPPET LANGUAGE. Position is temporary and quite challenging. **☛ ACHANALT 117**

CERTIFIED CUCUMBERIST. Of course, candidates must be fluent in both Greek and Latin and hold Ph.C. from a credentialed institution. Individuals with botanical levitation skills will be granted preference. **☛ GIRVAN 1221**

DOOR OPENER for Mr. Kinkaid, who remains quite sly.

CUCUMBER TAXIDERMIST, requires an eye for color.

SANITY COMPANION for my cousin Elliott. Pay commensurate with lucidity.

A GLASS JAR LARGE ENOUGH TO HOLD 1007 MEDIUM-SIZED CUCUMBERS for a confidential project that is not what you think. **☛ ROSEHALL 21**

INDIVIDUALS WITH NO KNOWLEDGE OF MID-CENTURY MALAYSIA. Must enjoy pudding of all sorts. Discretion is promised. **☛ VICAR LANE 201**

THE 13-DIGIT NUMBER USED TO SEAL THE TOMB of King Rezancohal in the Valley of the Mist. Also seeking a deck of blue playing cards. **☛ YARBOROUGH 12**



COCKTAIL RECIPES BEGINNING WITH "Q" AND ENDING WITH "C". (It's not as easy as you think). **☛ MILLVILLE 12**

PERSONALS

MALE WHO IS ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT AT ENUNCIATING WORDS BEGINNING WITH "S" other alveopalatal fricatives seeks companion who excels at vowels. **☛ BURNSTON 56**

SEEKING INDIVIDUAL WHO SHARES MY FASCINATION WITH THE POETRY of 16th century Mongolian horsemen for a mature consensual relationship based on agonizingly obtuse conversation. **☛ BRORA 12**

DEATH NOTICES



FOR SALE

PINE WOOD WAND that conjures gherkins and rose petals in response to an ever-changing list of words. Serious inquiries only. **☛ PITLOCHRY 2150**

DISAPPEARING KNIFE. Recently sharpened. Frequently visible during daylight hours. **☛ BORILLUS 422**

THE ANSWER TO THE MOST VEXING QUESTION EVER. In excellent condition. **☛ FURVIS 21**

SEEKING

A LIST OF SEEMINGLY RANDOM WORDS that may lead to untold bounty of tiny pickles and potpourri. **☛ ST. OLAF 433**

THE MISCRANT WHO TAMPERED WITH THE TIME MACHINE left in the barn at 54 McDougal Lane in 1865. Telegraph Samuel Farthing with any pertinent information.

THE WOMAN WHO CEASELESSLY PEERS DOWN FROM THE UPPER STORY OF THE YELLOW MANSION has, from the looks of it, passed over to a 'quieter' neighbourhood. Service to be held prior to cribbage Tuesday night.

ALL NINE OF THE FERRETS LIVING IN THE ATTIC of 47 Willow Drive have met their end due to a rather extraordinary family squabble.

MRS. LARKIN AVERIL HAS NOT DIED. She is merely resting her eyes and taking a break from knitting that sweater. Please do not disturb.

AFTER A PEACEFUL DEPARTURE during his sleep on Sunday, Mr. Garth Karndell has requested that all friends and acquaintances come to his home to watch 'every single slide' from his last vacation.

LOST

STUTTERING CRYSTAL BALL. Somewhat insecure, but making progress. Responds to positive affirmations. **☛ CORLISS 67**

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR CUCUMBER

TIP N° 5

When addressing your cucumber, be friendly but never patronising. Do not assume they have less intelligence than you.



THE CULTIVATE the UNUSUAL EDITION

THE MYSTERIOUS CUCUMBERS OF RUSSIA (AND BELARUS)



In 2007, in neighbouring Belarus, mysterious cucumbers began materialising in people's jacket pockets. To this day, the mystery has never been explained – and no, I didn't make this up! It should be noted that these inexplicable events took place in Shklov, arguably the cucumber capital of the world (it is another town with a cucumber monument). There is a national cucumber day in Shklov that starts with a dramatised show celebrating cucumber production, followed by a hymn in praise of the cucumber.

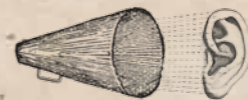
CELEBRATE WORLD CUCUMBER DAY
with a slice of the UNUSUAL

JUNE 14TH

The biggest issue facing mankind in this era of drama and instability is the cucumber. Where did it come from? How big is it? Can I have some please? If we do not understand the cucumber, then we are all doomed. Today we don our fur hats and other stereotypical apparel, and head to Russia – home of delicious, tiny, bumpy cucumbers. Cucumbers have been extremely popular in Russia for a long time, arriving from Asia in the 9th century. There are no official records of their existence, until 1528, when the German Ambassador Herberstein mentions eating them during his journey to Moscow. It is likely that the cucumbers the ambassador

enjoyed were of the 'Lukhovitsy' variety, which are (like the author) short, crisp and bumpy. Lukhovitsy, which is 84 miles southeast of Moscow, is famous for its cucumbers... it even has a monument to them. The 'koryushka' of St. Petersburg is a remarkable fish, for when it is cut open it releases the smell of fresh cucumbers. There is a koryushka festival every year in May to celebrate this delicious and strangely fragrant fish, known in Germany as the 'binnenstint'. Some consider the cucumber to be the national vegetable of Russia, where it is eaten in several ways – for example, peeled and dipped in sour cream, or just pickled.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR CUCUMBER



TIP N° 1

Cucumbers love poetry, but be warned – keep it epic! They care more about great dramas than your love life.

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TRUTH, LIES AND PSYCHIC PLANTS: THE CLEVE BACKSTER STORY

Cleve Backster is a remarkable man. He may not be the only former CIA operative to believe in extra-sensory perception – but he is the only one to believe that this ability is possessed not just by humans, but also plants. His findings were based on a field he pioneered: polygraph lie detection.

As an interrogator for the Army Counter-Intelligence Corps at the end of World War II, Backster was a master in the dark arts of truth serums and hypno-interrogation (that he had also been a circus stunt rider is irrelevant to our story). He then joined the CIA, founding their polygraph programme. The polygraph, popularly known as the 'lie detector', measures a subject's blood pressure, pulse, respiration and skin conductivity while under interrogation. The theory states that certain fluctuations in these physiological responses reveal whether the subject is lying or telling the truth. Its effectiveness is debatable, with many studies concluding it simply doesn't work. Regardless, the CIA liked it, and buoyed by his

success, Backster formed the Backster School of Lie Detection in New York City in 1960. The school, which still exists, trained policemen in how to use the polygraph.

In the 1960s Backster became fascinated by the work of the great polymath Jagadish Chandra Bose. Bose had invented an extremely accurate device for measuring the growth of plants, called the Crescograph. With measurements as small as one millionth of an inch, the device could register how different stimuli affected plant growth. Astonishingly, he discovered that music affected plant growth. Bose had noticed that plants and their different organs were sensitive stimuli and generated electrical impulses, suggesting excitement.



The playwright (and vegetarian) George Bernard Shaw was traumatised by Bose's demonstration of a cabbage supposedly convulsing in pain as Bose boiled it to death.

Perhaps this is what inspired Backster, early one morning in 1966, to hook his office plant up to the lie detector. In an attempt to produce a strong re-sponse from the plant, he decided to burn one of its leaves. As soon as he reached for his matches, the polygraph measured a strong reading. The plant was scared, and more significantly it had pre-empted his action – it had demonstrated extra-sensory perception!

From this, Backster developed his theory of primary perception. He proffered that plants can feel emotions and communicate with other life forms. Backster's radical new theory delighted the world, and his book 'The Secret Life of Plants' became a

bestseller. Backster was interviewed on television by everyone from Johnny Carson to David Frost, and became a global sensation. There was even a show about Backster's theories, starring Leonard Nimoy.

It was all very exciting, and inspired scientists around the world to replicate his experiments, but it soon became apparent they couldn't replicate his re-sults...

Backster responded with possible explanations, such as his experiments not being reproduced properly, but the scientific community remained unimpressed. However, this did nothing to assuage Backster's belief – he remained utterly convinced of his theory.

It is intriguing to note that these notions go back even further in history. Gustav Fechner was a German experimental psychologist who did some amazing things, including correctly predicting what happens if you cut a living human's brain in two. In 1848 he published his theory that plants have an emotional life, and that one should help them grow with affection and talk.

Perhaps, in time, it will turn out that Backster was right. In the meantime, though, be kind to your cucumber, just in case.

WHY EVERYTHING YOU THINK YOU KNOW ABOUT ROMAN CUCUMBERS IS WRONG

Emperor Tiberius loved cucumbers, as did both the rich and poor of Rome... or did they? Find out why everything you think you know about Roman cucumbers may not be true.

Emperor Tiberius of Rome grew cucumbers in his greenhouse and insisted on eating one every day, as he believed it vital for good health (this we know thanks to the famous historian Pliny). The cucumber was popular in Rome, thanks to sophisticated agricultural techniques that made them easy to grow in large numbers. Not only were they eaten – they were also used as medicine. They were recommended for treating scorpion bites and short-sightedness, and women trying to conceive often wore cucumbers around their waists.

However, after the sacking of Rome, the cucumber largely

disappeared... or so we thought. Recent research by several historians suggests our understanding of Roman cucumber history may be wholly untrue – and it all comes down to mistranslation. Follow me, dear reader, and prepare for a shock.

THE GREAT GREEN FALLACY

H.S. Paris (from the Agricultural Research Organization) and J. Janick (Department of Horticulture & Landscape Architecture) looked into the history of ancient Roman cucumbers in detail, and made a remarkable discovery: they found no evidence for the presence of cucumber (*Cucumis sativus*) in Mediterranean cultures during this time period.

Historians had repeatedly translated *cucumis* and *sikyos* hemeros as 'cucumber' despite the fact that many written descriptions of such fruit did not seem to tally with cucumbers at all. It seems that one man's cucumber is another man's melon, and that all the contemporary

references we once thought were to cucumbers, were actually describing melons! In a further revelation, H.S. Paris and J. Janick found no pictorial evidence for cucumbers in Europe until the 14th century "... suggesting the possibility that the cucumber was introduced overland into Europe from the East following the Mongol conquests that began with Genghis Khan in the early 13th century."

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR CUCUMBER

TIP N° 2

Let your cucumber know you love it, by getting its name tattooed on your sternum.

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO PLANT PERCEPTION

Plants can respond in remarkably clever ways to stimuli, but debate rages on whether this can be considered 'intelligence'. We grasp this hot potato of a subject, and throw it through the hothouse window of normality... hang on, this metaphor is confusing me now – best ignore this introduction and read the bit below. Bye. (It was lovely to see you by the way, your hair looks great...)

Why do we struggle to comprehend that plants have intelligence? There are probably two main reasons: plants respond to things on a different timescale to our own, and plants are weird.

Let's start with the second point, plants are weird. They don't look like us (depending on who is reading this, no offence meant to the cucumber community) or behave like us, and they don't even have a brain. Well, actually it turns out they do have a 'brain', of sorts: the root tips or 'radicles'. Incredibly, scientists have shown that a plant's radicles transmit the same signals as neurons do in an animal brain (scientists, feel free to stamp your foot if you disagree). OK, they're not as sophisticated as a brain, but a plant can have hundreds of thousands, or even millions of radicles. And because they're not located in one place (as in an animal's skull), the plant has better 'survivability' – if it had one central 'brain' and a passing hippo trod on it, the plant would be killed. The idea of the radicle as the plant's 'brain' is not a new one – Charles Darwin was talking about it in 1880.

However, a large number of scientists reject the idea of comparing a plant's sensory system to a brain, seeing the two things as being far too different. Many also say that describing a plant as being intelligent is incorrect. But this depends

on how you define intelligence, and there are several definitions that would apply to plants. So there! Ya boo sucks!

So what do plants use their 'intelligence' to achieve? To seek sunlight, to catch prey (some can even catch birds), to lure pollinating animals, to poison predators. There is even evidence that plant's roots will alter course before hitting an obstacle, demonstrating that they can generate a complex 'sense' picture of the scene ahead. More remarkable still, plants will send out a chemical signal when being attacked by predators, and nearby plants of the same species will detect this message and prepare their defences. Plants can learn, and may even have memories. They also respond to sound and touch.

Plants respond to environmental stimuli by changing their form (morphology) and movement. I'm personally only capable of the latter response, though I am trying to develop my biceps for an arm-wrestling competition.

So slow!

As well as being weird, plants generally move very slowly compared to animals. Though they may be responding in complicated ways to stimuli, they do so in ways so much slower than ours that it's hard to comprehend their movements and actions. Yet this isn't true of all plants – a truly astonishing exception is the white mulberry bush, which catapults pollen at 400mph (over half the speed of sound)! Some plants that lure, catch and eat animals also need fast reactions, as well as keen senses.

Whether we use the word 'intelligence' or not when describing plant behaviour, the world of plant perception and response is a fascinating one. Remember this next time you're on a moonlit picnic with your cucumber plant.



COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR CUCUMBER

TIP N° 3

Before your cucumber goes to bed, whisper a growing spell to it. DO NOT WHISPER THIS SPELL TO YOUR PUMPKIN.

WHY I HATE CUCUMBERS

By Elstree Veeangliease

The following article may be offensive to cucumbers. Please do not read this if you are of a sensitive disposition, or if you cannot read.

I despise cucumbers. Hate them. Can't bear them. If I had my way, there would be no cucumbers anywhere. I would scatter all their seeds into space and free the world from their green crunchy tyranny. I would delete the word 'cucumber' from the dictionary, and outlaw its use as salacious innuendo. I would ban the cucumber sandwich, and buy every cucumber from every greengrocer in the land and launch every single one into the ocean by cannon.

I know what you're thinking – what is my reason for hating the beloved jade wand with such ferocious passion? Why would I reserve such bilious venom for this harmless, juicy, elongated prolate spheroid? Yes, I hear you, and I will tell you... Though I can see already from the look in your moonlike eyes that you are sympathetic to the villain of the salad bowl, so maybe there's no point in explaining. Okay, if you

remain open-minded I will do you the courtesy of elaboration: I was raised by wild cucumbers.

I would run with the pack through the night, howling at the sky and leaping with balletic grace into Hendrick's & Tonics. I have been the darling of the bar, the sweet friend of the ermine and pipistrel, and lain deliciously on the laps of Tsars and Tsaritsas. It was a life of elegance and decadence, a time of hothouses, pollinating bumblebees, and crisp and splendid slices.

I was an honorary cucumber, and lived as one for twelve glorious years. But one day in a moment of wild abandon I kissed a carrot. One day later, I was exiled from the court of the cucumber and have since lived wild in the forests of Sweden, alone and bedraggled. And that, my friend, is why I hate cucumbers.

