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Fibrous root system is mostly found in

The roots of seedlings have three main features: anchoring the plant to the soil, absorbing water and minerals and transporting them upwards, and storing the products of photosynthesis. Some roots are modified to absorb moisture and exchange gases. Most roots are underground. However, some plants also have adventitious roots, which appear above the ground from the shoot. Types of root systems Root systems are mainly of two types (Figure 1). Dicots have a taproot system, while monocots have a fibrous root system. A taproot system has a main root that grows down vertically, from which many smaller lateral roots occur. Dandelion is a good example; their tap roots usually break off when trying to pull these weeds, and they can regrow another shoot from the remaining root. A taproot system penetrates deep into the earth. In contrast, a fibrous root system is located closer to the soil surface, forming a dense network of roots that also helps prevent soil erosion (lawn grass is a good example, as is wheat, rice and corn). Some plants have a combination of tap roots and fibrous roots. Plants that grow in dry areas often have deep root systems, while plants that grow in areas with abundant water are likely to have shallower root systems. Figure 1. (a) Taproot systems have a main root that grows down, while (b) fibrous root systems consist of many small roots. (credit b: change of work by Austen Squarepants/Flickr) Root growth and anatomy figure 2. A longitudinal view of the root reveals the zones of cell division, extension and maturation. Cell division occurs in the apical meristem. Root growth begins with seed germination. When the plant embryo comes from the seed, the radial of the embryo forms the root system. The tip of the root is protected by the root cap, a structure exclusive to roots and unlike any other plant structure. The root cap is replaced continuously because it is damaged easily when the root pushes through the soil. The root tip can be divided into three zones: a cell-division zone, an extension zone, and a maturation and differentiation zone (Figure 2). The cell division zone is closest to the root tip; it consists of the active separator cells of the root meristem. The extension zone is where the newly created cells increase in length, thereby prolonging the root. Beginning at the first root year is the cell maturation zone where the root cells begin to separate to special cell types. All three zones are in the first centimeter or so of the root tip. The root has an outer layer of cells called the epidermis, which surround areas of ground tissue and vascular tissue. The epidermis provides protection and contributes to absorption. Root hairs, which are extensions of root epidermal cells, increase the surface of the root, greatly contributing to the absorption of water and Figure 3. Coloring reveals different cell types in this light micrograph of a wheat (*Triticum*) root section. Sclerenchyma cells of exodermis and xylem cells stain red, and phloem cells stain blue. Other cell types stain black. Stele, or vascular tissue, is the area inside the endodermis (indicated by a green ring). Root hairs are visible outside the epidermis. (credit: scale-bar data from Matt Russell) Inside the root, the earth tissue forms two regions: cortex and pith (Figure 3). Compared to stems, roots have a lot of cortex and small pith. Both regions include cells that store photosynthetic products. The cortex is between the epidermis and vascular tissue, while the pith is located between vascular tissue and the center of the root. The vascular tissue of the root is arranged in the inner part of the root, which is called stele (Figure 4). A layer of cells known as endodermis separates the stele from the soil tissue of the outer part of the root. Endodermis is exclusive to roots, and serves as a checkpoint for materials entering the root vascular system. A waxy substance called suberin is present on the walls of the endodermal cells. This waxy region, known as the Casparian strip, forces water and solutes to cross the plasma membranes into endodermal cells instead of slipping between the cells. This ensures that only materials required by the root pass through the endodermis, while toxic substances and pathogens are generally excluded. The outermost cell layer of the vascular tissue of the root is the pericycle, an area that can give rise to lateral roots. In dicot roots, xylem and phloem of stele are arranged alternately in an X-shape, while in monocot roots, vascular tissue is arranged in a ring around the pith. Figure 4. In (left) typical dicots, vascular tissue forms an X-shape in the center of the root. In (right) typical monocots, the phloem cells and the larger xylem cells form a characteristic ring around the central pith. Root modifications Figure 5. Many vegetables are modified roots. Root structures can be changed for specific purposes. For example, some roots are bulbous and store starch. Antennae roots and prop roots are two forms of aboveground roots that provide additional support to anchor the plant. Tap roots, such as carrots, turnips and beets, are examples of roots that are modified for food storage (Figure 5). Epiphytic roots allow a plant to grow on another plant. For example, the epiphytic roots of orchids develop a spongy tissue to absorb moisture. Banyan tree (*Ficus* sp.) begins as an epiphyte, sifting in the branches of a host tree; antenna roots develop from the branches and eventually reach the ground, providing additional support (Figure 6). In skrupin (*Pandanus* sp.), a palm-like tree that grows in sand tropical soil, above ground prop roots from the nodes to provide additional support. Figure 6. (a) banyan tree, also known as suffocating figs, begins life as an epiphyte in a host tree. Antennae roots extend to the ground and support the growing plant, which eventually suffocates the host tree. (b) turnip develops aboveground roots that help support the plant in sandy soil. (credit a: change of work by psyberartist/Flickr; credit b: change of work by David Eikhoff) Compare a taproot system with

