

Unlike beloved children's stories, nature is a cruel, hard world that is painted not in watercolors but in blood. A study found that chemicals released by plants as they are eaten can help push caterpillars to cannibalism. Many plants release the chemical methyl jasmonate when stressed or damaged. Getting gnawed on by a caterpillar is stressful, so when the caterpillars start biting, the chemical flare goes up. Other nearby plants sense the flare and start producing their own methyl jasmonate, building a chemical camouflage around their leaves and stems. Once all the food sources taste terrible, caterpillars turn to the next available meal: each other. Plants with the time to build up a strong defense can make their leaves so unappetizing that caterpillars will start eating each other to get their fill, leaving the plant alone.

Researchers now plan to also look into how insect viruses are transferred during their more carnivorous period. If viruses that harm caterpillars are transferred more easily by cannibalism, that could be a gain for the plants. Not only are their leaves protected 10 from pests, but now those predators are spreading disease amongst themselves, reducing the herbivore population further. Interestingly enough, cannibalism can serve some important functions among these herbivores. Eating each other literally takes the competition out of the food chain, and keeps the surviving population strong in a time when food might be scarce. Therefore, we should not be too quick to judge these fuzzy little cannibals. It's a bug eat bug world out there

1. Which of the following statements is NOT TRUE according to the text?
 - (A) Stress may save plants from being consumed.
 - (B) Plants can manipulate their own perception of taste.
 - (C) Under constraints, plants can alter their predator's appetite.
 - (D) Cannibalism helps maintain food supply in times of need.
 - (E) The chemical methyl jasmonate drives caterpillars away from their natural food.
2. The topic of this passage is....
 - (A) Caterpillars' Consumption Behavior
 - (B) Cannibalism and Its Effect on Caterpillars
 - (C) The Effect of Methyl Jasmonate on Insects
 - (D) Plant's Defense Mechanism against Herbivores
 - (E) The Cause and Effect of Cannibalism Among Caterpillars
3. It can be inferred from the text that...
 - (A) cannibalism may balance the supply and demand for food
 - (B) viruses are easily transferred by means of cannibalism
 - (C) the chemicals decrease the caterpillars' hunger for food
4. The purpose of this passage is to....
 - (A) convince readers that nature is harsh in reality
 - (B) educate readers not to judge herbivores hastily
 - (C) describe the effect of cannibalism among plant-eating animals
 - (D) explain how caterpillars can behave uncharacteristically
 - (E) inform the readers that cannibalism among herbivores is normal
5. What is the tone of the passage ?
 - (A) Critical
 - (B) Amuse
 - (C) Objective
 - (D) Outraged
 - (E) Humorous