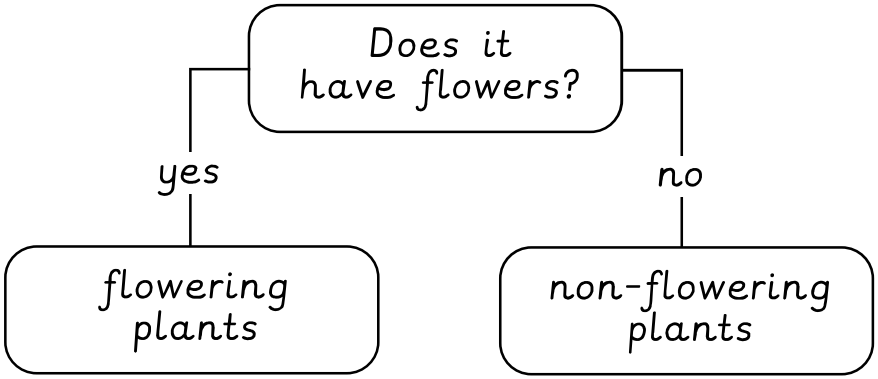
Science - Classification and changing habitats

Living things can be sorted and identified with a tool called a **classification key**, which uses a series of yes/no questions:



Taxonomists are scientists who sort, group, identify and name living things.

Habitats can change because of negative human impacts:

- Plastic pollution is building up in our seas, hurting animals that get trapped in or ingest it.
- Climate change, caused by human activities, is heating up the Earth, disrupting habitats and affecting species survival.
- Coral bleaching, resulting from increased sea temperatures, makes it difficult for coral and the animals that live there to survive.
- Deforestation involves cutting down large areas of forest, destroying the habitats of many plants and animals.

Habitats can change due to natural disasters:

- Earthquakes can make mountains change shape. They can also cause volcanoes to erupt, destroy animals' shelters and uproot plants.
- Wildfires can destroy large areas, burning all the plants. This can cause animals to die or lose their homes.
- Floods can make plants waterlogged or uproot them. They can wash away soil, destroy animals' shelters and cause animals to drown. Floods can also spread disease.

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Living things can be **classified** into different **groups** according to their shared **characteristics**:

Animals **without backbones** are classified as **invertebrates**. They include the following groups:

worms	snails and slugs	insects	spiders
			

Conservationists are scientists who protect and restore habitats. They are working to reverse negative human impacts.

Animals **with backbones** are classified as **vertebrates**. They include the following groups:

fish	amphibians	reptiles	birds	mammals
				

Conservationists help by:

- Studying nature.
- Protecting and restoring habitats.
- Cleaning up pollution.
- Fighting climate change.
- Helping endangered species.
- Making laws and rules to protect the environment.
- Educating others about the environment.