


Trees vs Giraffe

A giraffe, in the sunshine, is eating a tree
Leaves have everything that this animal needs
Water and protein, vitamins and minerals
But to trees, these giraffes are no better than criminals
What may look so innocent is more than it appears
It's a battle that has lasted for millions of years
With weapons, and chemicals, and enchantment of senses
In a race to subdue their opponents' defences



Acacias have enlisted armies of ants to their side
Provided specialized hollowed out thorns to reside
Producing sugary nectar is how the trees pay
The ants to drive any hungry giraffes far away
So when giraffes come for their usual snack
The ants all rush out to bite and attack

Giraffes reach up and around with their gigantic necks
But not before receiving some nasty ant pecks
This neck has allowed them to easily feast
Beyond any other tree-eating animal's reach
The skin on their necks is incredibly thick
To protect them from the Acacia thorns' prick

Covered in thorns, some long and some dense,
Is probably the most effective Acacia defence
Thorns poke and they prick they stick and they stab
The giraffe with every mouthful they grab
It leaves the giraffe an important question to ask
Are these leaves worth this painful and challenging task?

The giraffe will certainly start to be cautious
After consuming a tree that has made it nauseous
Giraffes have adapted a high tolerance to tannins
Much higher than their other savannah companions
But young leaves have less tannins, are less protected, and juicy
A prehensile tongue with sticky saliva allows giraffes to be choosy

So Acacias have many a trick up their sleeves
To prick and poison with their branches and leaves
And giraffes' many adaptations are why they are seen
As nature's most perfect tree-eating machine
But the war between giraffes and trees has no malice
It's merely two species evolving a balance
And although they both battle to help tip the scale
Without BOTH the savannah is destined to fail
So remember each day and in all that you do

World
**Giraffe
Week**



**SAVE THE GIRAFFES
AND SAVE THE
TREES TOO**