

PRIMARY ENERGY STORY: The Tale of Fern Fossil



Once upon a time, a beautiful fern tree grew in a swamp. All day, she soaked up sunlight and stored it in her fronds. The sun's energy helped her grow tall.

The biggest frond was Fern Fossil. Every day she stretched closer to the sun. She was proud to be the tallest frond on the tree.

One day, the sky grew dark and a strong wind blew. The other fronds huddled together. They gave each other strength. But Fern was too high. She was all alone. There were no fronds tall enough to help her.

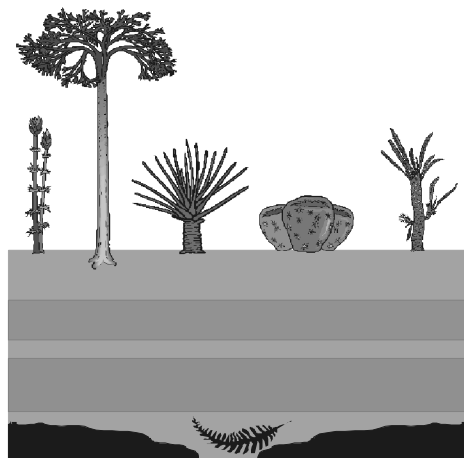
The wind blew harder and Fern's stem snapped. She fell from the tree into the dark water. Fern sank to the bottom of the swamp. She thought her journey was over.

Nature had a different plan for Fern. For a long time, she lay in the swamp. More plants fell into the water. They covered Fern like a blanket.

After many years, the water dried up and the swamp turned into land. Dinosaurs roamed over the earth. Fern lay under the ground, buried deeper and deeper.

The weight of the dirt and the heat of the earth changed Fern. She was no longer green. She lost her leafy shape. But she still had the sun's energy stored in her.

Fern Fossil had turned into a shiny black rock full of energy. She was a piece of coal. Fern and many other plants were now a big seam of coal buried under the ground.



One day, a big machine dug into the earth. It took away the dirt on top of the coal. It lifted Fern from the earth and put her into a huge truck. She was taken to a building where she was washed, then put on a train.

The train chugged through the night to a power plant. Fern was put into a boiler and burned. Her energy produced a lot of heat.

The power plant used Fern's energy to make electricity. It traveled through a power line to a house. A little boy turned on a light so that he could read.

The energy that Fern had gotten from the sun millions of years ago was lighting the night. Fern had traveled a long way.