Well actually it is not a rose, it is a plant that is related to chocolate and marshmallow (can anyone say s’mores), but it is famous for being featured in the National Geographic article “The Big Bloom” in July 2002. **Flowering plants** dominate our landscape today but that was not always the case. Flowers are a “newer” feature in the plant world than most other plant structures. This special flower came from Republic Washington along with many other plant fossils and quite a few insect fossils, many of them the best of their kind in the world.

Republic Washington is in the northeast corner of our state. Fossils here tell us what lived here 50 million years ago.

[http://stonerosefossil.org/](http://stonerosefossil.org/)
Plant fossils often take a back seat to animals when it comes to movies and books, but to a scientist, plants can tell us much more about Earth’s history than most animals. Plants help describe what the environment was like, including the **climate** at that time. That means changes in the types plant fossils found in the same area may show that the climate was also changing in that same area. The fossil plants at Stonerose are evidence that the climate in what is now Washington was much warmer than today, more like what we now find in Florida.

Insects are another fossil type that finds it difficult to become famous, but some of the very best come from the Stonerose fossil beds in Washington State.

Learn more about the Big Bloom at:

Fossil leaves and Leaves today

Lots of things can change in 50 million years. There are no Columbian mammoths or giant ground sloths today. But is it possible that some things can stay the same or similar for 50 million years?

1. Compare the fossil leaf from Washington of 50 million years ago with leaves from today.

What do you think is most likely?

These are the same leaves and this plant has been in Washington for 50 million years.

The leaf from today is from the same family as the fossil leaf but it is only a very distant cousin, not the same.

These leaves are from plants not related to each other they just happen to look alike.

2. Use a real leaf to make an imprint in clay and then compare it to the fossil leaf.