

Five sentences are missing in the text. Read the sentences (A–H) and match them with the gaps (1–5) in the text. There are two extra sentences. Write the letters into the boxes of the table below. Use each letter only once. There is an example (0) at the beginning.

## Wind witches of the West

Rolling across dusty and open ground, blown along by the wind, tumbleweeds remind you immediately of Western films. Together with the cactus, these 'wind witches', as tumbleweeds are also called, are the symbolic plants of the western parts of the United States. (0) \_\_\_\_\_. Tumbleweeds are thorn-covered bushes of the thistle family and they can grow up to two meters in diameter.

Each tumbleweed starts as a small seed on the ground that turns into a seedling in late winter. (1) \_\_\_\_\_. In spring it flowers, and by summer it has taken on its round shape. Each plant produces up to 5,000 new seeds, protected by its thorns from hungry animals. In the fall, the plant stops growing, dries up and dies. Most other plants are happy to stay in one place and let animals or the wind sow their seeds. But the tumbleweed likes to take things into its own hands. With the help of the wind, the dry tumbleweed breaks away from its roots, and starts to roll across the wide, empty plains. (2) \_\_\_\_\_. So the cycle of life is complete.



A tumbleweed on its journey

Surprisingly, the tumbleweed is not a native of the US. Its official name 'Russian thistle' indicates its Ukrainian origin. Seeds probably first arrived in the US in the 1880s hidden in grain imports. (3) \_\_\_\_\_. Eventually the plant reached Canada and Mexico. Mountains were a barrier for a while but the seeds found their way onto the new trains and crossed the Rocky Mountains into California. This quick-growing plant soon became a problem for the early farmers. (4) \_\_\_\_\_. The Department of Agriculture at that time tried to stop the invasion but the tumbleweed managed to establish itself permanently.

Although it looks pretty and harmless, this invader can be a major danger to people and agriculture. The dried-up, nomadic bushes get stuck everywhere, pile up against fences and buildings, block up waterways and canals and can become a big fire hazard. (5) \_\_\_\_\_. This is one of the reasons the US Department of Agriculture is still trying to get rid of the plant in America. As it is impossible to collect all the plants and seeds, the Department is researching a biological way to control it. Tests are currently underway to get rid of this American icon.

- A These methods are very time-consuming.
- B It stopped other plants from growing.
- C First seen in Dakota it quickly spread across country.
- D This quickly grows into a plant with roots and branches.
- E Their dryness makes them very flammable.
- F Famous songs are named after them.
- G *And they are each as prickly as the other.*
- H As it bounces along, it shakes loose its seeds.

(0)	G
(1)	
(2)	
(3)	
(4)	
(5)	