

**THE ANSWER
TO THE CROSSWORD
BEGINS ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

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ANSWER

1. Blackheads

I	C	U		G	O	S	O	F	T		I	S	N	T
M	A	P		L	A	U	R	E	N		S	W	A	P
P	E	P	P	E	R	M	I	N	T		E	A	T	S
A	S	I	A	N		M	O	N		S	E	N		
C	A	T	S		F	I	N	E	S	T		S	O	T
T	R	Y		A	L	T		L	O	L		O	N	O
			L	I	U		T		B	O	U	N	C	Y
A	B	H	O	R		B	O	X		U	R	G	E	S
C	R	O	S	B	Y		P		T	I	N			
R	E	L		A	A	A		V	H	S		O	C	T
E	W	E		G	O	F	R	E	E		N	A	L	A
		C	B	S		G	E	E		H	I	F	I	S
E	B	A	Y		C	H	E	R	R	Y	P	I	C	K
C	A	R	E		E	A	S	E	U	P		S	H	E
O	D	D	S		O	N	E	D	G	E		H	E	D

Since we're starting on Halloween, it seemed appropriate to riff on BLACK. This type of puzzle, one whose theme type is "words-that-precede-___" or "words-that-follow-___," has a long and rich history in puzzling. No, really! Steinberg, back me up here.

It used to be that BLACK would just be in the grid multiple times, back when a repeated word theme was acceptable. Alas, the theme is easy to do so its been done to death and is often snubbed by the gridderati. I think it's merely one of the many tools at our disposal; if it uses colorful phrases and isn't done too often, it seems solid to me.

Nowadays, the usual thing to do would be to put your keyword in the SE corner as a revealer, BLACK in this case. Here I tried to give the theme a new twist by putting the keyword in the title (which all puzzles should have, let's be honest). This also freed up the grid a bit to include the bonus central short-ies. That whole central area started as all black squares, then it had BLACK running through it, then it became what you see now.

Hope you have a spooktastic Halloween! My daughter is going as a garden gnome and my wife and I are going to be flamingos, in case you were wondering.