

NATURE ACTIVITIES

TREE HABITAT SCAVENGER HUNT

Would you like to investigate tree habitats? Go out into a wooded area today and get ready to find animal homes, food, plants and animals themselves that live in and around the trees!

PART ONE - OBSERVE THE TREES!

Resources/materials needed: Camera, binoculars notebook, field guide, print outs, notebook, pencil

Skills: Cognitive, Motor Skills, Environmental Appreciation, Hand-Eye Coordination, Technical Skills, Plant ID, Bird ID, Animal ID, Invasive Species ID, Journaling

DIRECTIONS:

Step 1: Find a space in your backyard that has trees or go into the woods for the full experience! Beware of ticks and wear bug repellent.

Step 2: Look for a bird's nest in a branch. Do you see any birds living inside? What is the nest made out of? Where on a branch is it located? Did you find any on the ground? Use your binoculars or camera to view birds high in the tree tops. Take photos if you have a camera. Take note of the birds you see and look for it in your Bird ID field guide or app.

Step 3: Look for a fallen down log that has begun to rot. Is it hollow? Do you see anything living inside such as bugs or small animals such as rabbits or sleeping raccoons? Take note of what you find in your journal. You may find creepy crawlies if you look under the bark or under a rock beside the log.

Step 4: Now see if you can find peeling birch bark pictured to the right. You may find many insects living in these crevices. Take pictures or draw what you find!

Step 5: Find moss growing on tree bark. This provides food and a home for other insects. It keeps in moisture and lives on the bottom of trees especially.



Photo Credit: Baristanet



Photo Credit: Lyric Bird Garden



Photo Credit: Dreams Time



Photo Credit: 123rf
The English Woodworker

Step 6: Do you think you can find fungi on trees? Fungi tends to grow on dead trees and there are many various kinds. Take photos of what you find and try to identify them with a Fungi/Mushroom Field Guide or online. Look closely. Do you see any bugs living on these?

Step 7: Look out for holes inside of tree trunks. These can be natural holes that animals may live in or holes made from woodpeckers featured in the photo to the right. Do you see any woodpeckers living in the holes? It acts as a nest for their young as well as a way to find bugs inside the tree that they will eat. You will also see lines of smaller holes in trees when a woodpecker is feeding. Draw the shape of the holes in your journal. Standing dead trees make great homes for all kinds of animals!

Step 8: Be on the lookout for other bugs or animals feeding. if you find sticks or leaves with holes or bite marks, there may be insects or animals nearby that has had their favorite meal. Take photos of your findings. Draw the leaf shape with a bite taken out. What do you think at this?

Step 9: You may find some small trees with bark rubbed off a few feet high. This is buck rub from deer that are using their antlers. It is rough on young trees and compromises their survival. You may also find that some deer took bikes out of saplings and the leaves off of low hanging branches.

Step 10: Look on the ground. Do you see any shells of acorns, hickory nuts or walnuts? Depending on when you do this scavenger hunt, you may not find evidence of freshly eaten nuts. Acorns and nuts tend to drop in autumn. You may be able to find last years acorn caps or nut shells around. See what you can find!

Step 11: Other food that animals might be eating is broken up pinecones. You can find these underneath conifer trees (cone bearing)such as pine trees, spruce, cedar, fir, yew, larch, juniper and hemlock (tiny pinecones) Animals are looking to eat the seeds inside. What kind of animal do you think ate these?

You may also see berries in the wild, such as black berries, and raspberries. Robins, red fox, cardinals, squirrels, field mice, bears, skunks and racoons love eating blackberries.

Reflection: What did you find on your Tree Habitat Scavenger Hunt? Did you enjoy getting out into nature and seeing how certain spaces provide homes for animals? Did you find any Invasive pests mentioned in the newsletter?



Photo Credit: Mr. Tree Inc.



Photo Credit: Permies



Photo Credit PLT

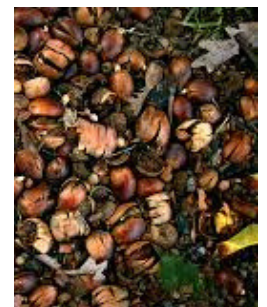


Photo Credit: Hunting NY



Photo Credit: Sussex

PART TWO - INVENT A SUPERHERO THAT FIGHTS INVASIVE PESTS

Resources/materials needed: Notebook, pencil, paper, crayons, markers, colored pencils, pictures of invasive pests.

Skills: Cognitive, Motor, Hand-Eye Coordination, Imagination, Environmental Appreciation, Identification

DIRECTIONS:

Step 1: Start studying the invasive pests that harm native trees such as the Emerald Ash Borer, Spotted Lanternfly, Citrus Longhorned Beetle, and the Woolly Aloid. You may have seen some during your scavenger hunt. If so, you want to report them and get an Arborist to the tree.

Step 2: Start brainstorming about your Superhero's character and purpose. Do they target a certain invasive pests? Do they protect a certain tree? For example, Eastern Hemlock trees need protected from the Woolly Aloid. How will the Superhero do this? Are they a group of Superhero's like in Captain Planet that all have a certain power, but together they save the world? Watch out for Vin Vasive!

Step 3: Once you have your Superhero's purpose and special power, start visualizing what they will look like and what kind of environment they live in. Are they a regular person in real life? Is it you? What is the background story of your Superhero?

Step 3: Now you have thought thoroughly about what your Superhero does and who they are, it is time to start drawing! You can create a comic telling a story over multiple pages of paper and put it together in a book form. Or you can make a poster/drawing of the superhero. You can also make a wanted poster of an invasive to tape up around your neighborhood (on approved locations of course) Get creative!

Reflection: Talk about your experience. Have you seen any invasive pests in the outdoors? Are you more able to identify them? How did your Superhero save the trees?



Spotted Lanternfly Nymph
Photo Credit: Growing Produce

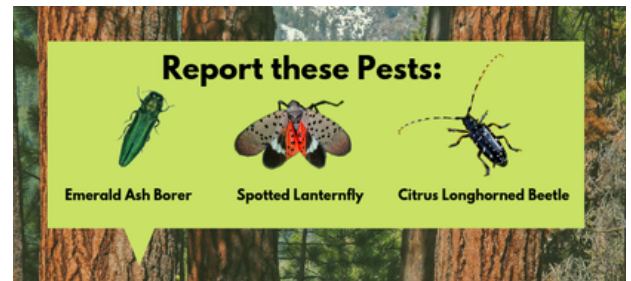


Photo Credit: Medium



Photo Credit: Vin Vasive



Photo Credit: Supersankari



Photo Credit: Artful Parent

Resources:

imagoeearth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Day-12-Invasive-Species.pdf
bcinvasives.ca/documents/Education_Teacher_Resources_FINAL_06-02-2014.pdf
blm.gov/or/resources/recreation/tablerock/files/Habitat_Scavenger_Hunt.pdf

www.olmstedparks.org/activities/animal-habitat-scavenger-hunt/
whyy.org/articles/nature-scavenger-hunt-anyone-the-franklin-institute-starts-with-spotted-lanternfly-eggs/
plt.org/stem-strategies/trees-as-habitats/