OUTDOORS ❀ GRADES 2-6 ❀ FALL, SPRING ❀ PROJECT

Magic Spots

DESCRIPTION

Choosing one location in the garden to observe for several weeks, each student records the changes that occur in this habitat and the types and behavior of its insect residents.

OBJECTIVE

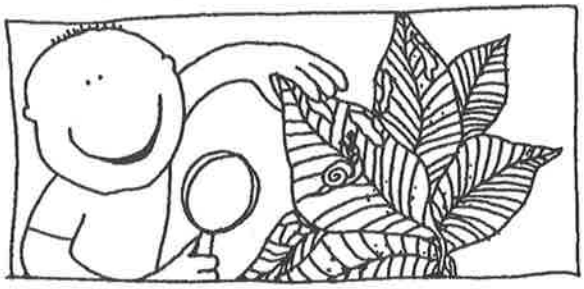
To demonstrate the variety of living organisms and their interrelationships in an undisturbed environment.

TEACHER BACKGROUND

A habitat is the environment necessary for a living organism to survive. Insects and plants in the habitat will provide shelter and food for one another. To observe a habitat, students should get as close to the area as possible, be very still and quiet, and disturb the area as little as possible.

MATERIALS

- Observation Sheet, 1 per student, page 424
- garden or natural environment
- drawing boards
- science journals
- pencils
- insect reference books (optional)
- hand lenses (optional)
- bug boxes (optional)



CLASS DISCUSSION

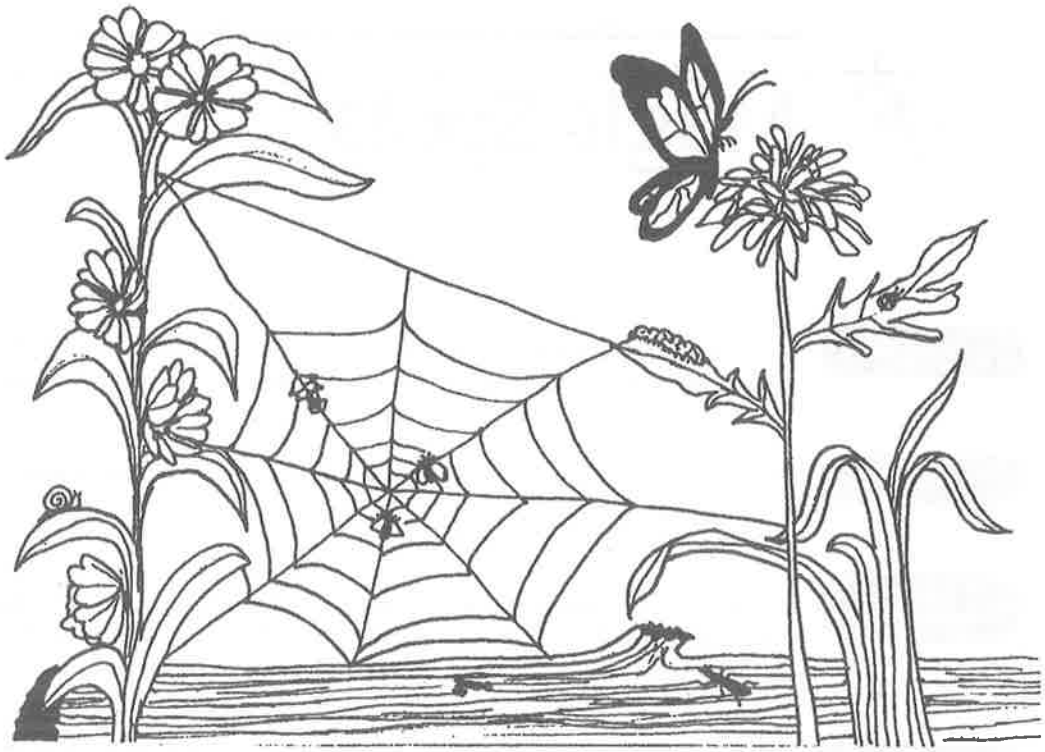
What do you need to do to be a good observer? *(List ideas on board.)* Imagine one of your favorite spots in the garden, your very own magic spot. If you were to go there and sit very quietly for a while, what do you predict you would see? *(Have students record ideas in their science journals and list some of the predictions on the board.)* What might an insect be doing in a flower? Under a leaf? In the soil? Do you think if you are good observers you will be able to see what the insects are doing?

ACTION

1. Have each student choose his or her own magic spot in the garden or in a natural environment. The spot should contain only one or two mature plants.

2. Have students observe in their special spots until they discover at least three different types of insects. They can look carefully under leaves, inside the plant, and in the soil around the plant.

3. Have students draw their special habitat, including the plants and the insects' locations in relation to the plant.



4. Have students draw and describe in their science journals at least one of the insects: What does it look like? *(wings, legs, mouth)* Where does it live? *(under the leaf, in the ground)* What does it eat? *(the plant, aphids, flying insects) Note:* To assist students in this, you may want to use bug boxes that allow insects to be caged and magnified for a short time. Be sure to return the insect carefully to its habitat.

5. Repeat this activity at least once a week for several weeks. Have students record the changes they observe in their habitat. Have students share observations.

WRAP UP

Which habitat had the largest variety of insects? What kinds of insects were found in more than one habitat? What does the plant provide for the insects living around it? What do the insects provide for the plant? How could you control the insects eating the plants without destroying other insects in your habitat? Categorize insects and plants in your habitat as helpful or harmful to your plants. Explain your reasons for putting the insects in the different categories.

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Have students use insect guides to research the name and characteristics of the insects in the habitat.

2. Have students draw each insect, labeling the drawing with what the insect eats, where it lives, and its relationship to humans. Collect the illustrations to make a class Garden Insect Book.

3. Have students write stories about their Magic Spots.

Observation Sheet

Date: _____ Observations:	Date: _____ Observations:
Date: _____ Observations:	Date: _____ Observations: