

Focus on: Animal Behaviors – Squash Bug

This lesson is meant to support the unit on Life in Changing Habitats. It can be done to generate background knowledge prior to teaching the unit, during the unit to reinforce lessons, or as a follow up to the unit to increase the retention of information. How you guide your students will depend on the information you have already taught and the information you want to introduce.

Clarifying Objectives:

4.L.1.2 Explain how animals meet their needs by using behaviors in response to information received from the environment.

4.L.1.4 Explain how differences among animals of the same population sometimes give individuals an advantage in surviving and reproducing in changing habitats.

Key Vocabulary:

Definitions can be found at <http://learnersdictionary.com>

- Animals
- Needs
- Behaviors
- Response
- Information Received
- Environment
- Difference
- Population
- Advantage
- Surviving
- Reproducing
- Habitats

Focus Question(s):

What is the behavior response of a squash bug when it is afraid? How does this response protect it from potential predators?

Materials:

School Garden with squash plants
Garden Gloves to protect hands while looking for squash bugs
Science Notebooks

Activities:

1. Show students the photo of the squash bug on the following page or visit the following website:
<http://growingsmallfarms.ces.ncsu.edu/growingsmallfarms-squashbug/>
2. Have students read the following article:
<https://chatham.ces.ncsu.edu/2017/06/check-your-garden-for-squash-bugs/>
3. Visit the school garden to look for squash bugs. (Squash bugs are a VERY common pest for squash plants in NC.) You will need squash plants (zucchini, summer squash, pumpkins, etc.)

Guiding Questions:

- Where did you find the squash bug?
- What do squash bugs look like?
- What were the squash bugs doing?
- What did you notice when you picked up the squash bug?
- Why do you think the squash bug gave off that odor? What made that reaction happen?
- What information did the squash bug receive from its

4. Look for squash bugs on the leaves of squash plants, near the base of the plant, on the stem, on the underside of leaves, etc.
5. When squash bugs are found, they should be picked off of the plant and squashed or placed in a bucket of soapy water. Both are organic forms of pest control.
6. When students pick off the squash bug, they should notice a mild odor given off by the squash bug. Discuss this occurrence.
7. Have students record their observations and revelations in their science notebooks.
8. (Squash bugs are a type of stink bug.)

environment that caused it to release that odor?

- How does that odor benefit the squash bug?
- If you were a bird, how might it change your action if you noticed that odor?

