

Focus on: Animals in a Garden Ecosystem

This lesson is meant to support the unit on Structures & Functions of Living Organisms. 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. Please remember that many gardens run on a yearly cycle and it will be easier to find more components of that ecosystem when it is at its peak season. You can, of course, utilize the garden at different times of the year, but the components of the ecosystem will be most evident during the peak growing season.

Clarifying Objectives:

5.L.1.1 Explain why some organisms are capable of surviving as a single cell while others require many cells that are specialized to survive.

5.L.2.2 Classify the organisms within an ecosystem according to the function they serve: producers, consumers, or decomposers (biotic factors)

5.L.2.3 Infer the effects that may result from the interconnected relationship of plants and animals to their ecosystem

Key Vocabulary:

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

- Organism
- cell
- Require
- Specialized
- Survive
- Ecosystem
- Function
- Producer
- Consumer
- Decomposer
- Biotic Factor
- Infer
- Interconnected Relationship

Focus Question(s):

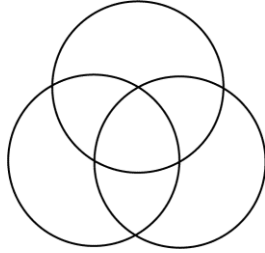
What is the function of the animals in the garden ecosystem? Are they beneficial to the garden or garden pests?

Materials:

- School Garden
- Science Notebooks
- Photographic technology (iPad, camera, etc)
- Garden Gloves to wear while exploring the garden especially if touching plants, lifting pots, etc.

Activities:

1. Review/Introduce the suggested vocabulary from this lesson.
2. Have students explore the garden to find 3 animals to compare/contrast. As they explore, students should record as much information as possible such as location and actions of the animals they find.
3. If possible they may photograph or video the animal in its natural habitat to assist them with further research or presentations.
4. Next, have students draw a Venn diagram with 3 circles. Labeling each circle with the name of the animal they found.



5. Have students use the information they found or already know about each animal to compare and contrast the creatures on the Venn Diagram.
6. This part of the lesson can be completed inside the classroom or on a later date. Students can be encouraged to further research their 3 animals before completing the Venn Diagram.
7. When completing the Diagram, students should use the vocabulary words discussed at the beginning of the lesson.
8. Discuss the Guiding Questions
9. Answer the Focus Question: What is the function of the animals in the garden ecosystem? Are they beneficial to the garden or garden pests?

Guiding Questions:

- Where did you find your animal?
- What was your animal doing?
- What does your animal need that causes it to be a part of the garden ecosystem? How do you know?
- Are the animals you found consumers or decomposers?
- If your animal is a consumer, is it an herbivore, omnivore, or carnivore? How do you know?
- Are your animals abiotic or biotic factors of the garden ecosystem?