DALLAS ARBORETUM
Education

Garden STEM at Home
Urban Nature Search

WE GROW MINDS, TOO.

OBJECTIVE:

STUDENTS WILL INVESTIGATE THAT EVERYDAY AREAS, INCLUDING PARKING LOTS, VACANT LOTS AND NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS ARE WILDLIFE HABITATS.

SOURCE

Project WILD K-12 Curriculum & Activity Guide

BACKGROUND

Cities are not just homes for people. They provide habitats for a rich array of plants, animals and other living organisms.

While humans can greatly change the environments that they live in, wildlife are usually unable to greatly alter their environment. Thus, they depend on the soil, water or vegetation that they call home. As a result, the plant and animal species present in an urban environment are a good indicator of the the environmental quality in the area.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. View or print the *What's Wild in Your City Activity Cards* linked below.

2. Discuss what wildlife means (plants, insects, spiders, birds, fish, reptiles, mammals and amphibians, etc.)

3. Explore ways to document wildlife present when you can't see them (i.e. tracks, webs, droppings, feathers, nests, etc.)

3. Select a card or cards to use to focus your search and decide upon a location to collect direct and indirect data.

4. After completing your search (choose a time alottment that is sufficient for your needs), discuss your findings.

5. Additional questions for discussion may include: How might a search in a rural area be different? Do you think animals would behave in the same way in a rural area? How does the environment affect animals' behavior?

6. Extension idea: Create a food chain or food web with the plants and animals observed.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Explore the Project WILD STEM Resource Guide:
https://www.fishwildlife.org/projectwild/step-stem-and-wild-work/urban-nature-search

What's Wild in Your City? Activity Cards:
https://www.riverkeepers.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Bird_Adaptations.pdf

Meet TPWD Urban Wildlife Biologists in Your Area
https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/wildlife_diversity/urban_program/