

Franklin Elementary School
Franklin Garden of Learning

Lesson Plan: Garden Ecosystems and Habitat
Grade Level: 1st Grade

Objective: To introduce students to the idea of habitats, the main native plant and animal species of their local area, and the concept of interconnectedness as fundamental to ecosystems. Finally, students critically analyze their own school as habitat for native species, creatively applying the information about habitat needs of these species in a list of suggestions for schoolyard restoration.

Resources and Materials Needed:

- Ball of twine
- Native Plant Cards
- Native Animal Cards
- Habitat Inventory Sheet
- Outdoor board/markers/eraser
- Clipboards/pencils

Time: 40 minutes for activity #1, 60 minutes for activity #2
Companion garden activities – any (works well when garden area is well developed with lots of mature plants, especially perennials)

Standards: Grade 1, Science: 2.a. Students know different plants and animals inhabit different kinds of environments and have external features that help them thrive in different kinds of places.

Introduction: Go over with students the basic idea of habitat – that every living creature needs food (an appropriate diet of healthy foods), water, and shelter (a comfortable home, relatively safe from predators). Give some examples of creatures students are familiar with and write up a chart of the elements of their habitat – include a plant, a wild animal, a domestic animal, and maybe a person. Explain to the students that we are going to be doing an inventory of habitat in our schoolyard, looking at what lives here and what could live here (maybe with some small changes...)

Procedures for Activity #1: Oakland Natives

Have students form a circle standing up. Announce that they will play a game with cards that shows how living things, even in the city, are all in a relationship to each other (although we as humans may not be able to see it). Have students pick one native animal/plant card and take a minute to study the back of the card. Ask students to raise their hands if they have seen their plant or animal in or around Oakland. Give the twine to the first volunteer and have him read the card. Once he reads the name of another living thing that his is dependent upon, then he can ask who in the class has that card. The ball of twine is thrown to that person, who then continues the game. At the end, once everyone is involved, the teacher should draw a card and dramatically announce that some disaster has affected one of the living things (like a grove of oak trees being cut, for example, or pesticides being dumped in the lake and killing the fish).