



AT HOME CLASSROOM RESOURCES

MIDDLE YEARS

A World of a Difference: Create a Field Guide

GRADE 6

LESSON DESCRIPTION

Students don't have to look far to find a diversity of living things. Have students zero in their scope in the backyard and search for as many species as they can find. This activity outlines a project to engage students by creating their very own backyard field guide.

SUGGESTED CURRICULUM LINKS

Diversity of Living Things: 6-1-04, 6-1-08, 6-1-10, 6-1-12

LESSON

A field guide to the backyard can be prepared as an online project or on a more traditional medium such as a sketching notebook.

1. Have students visit their backyard or a nearby greenspace and record as many plants, insects, spiders, birds or mammals as they can using drawing or photography.
2. Students research one or two species in each category to make the field guide more informative. Pictures as well as personal accounts of experiences they've had with the species can add zest to the guide.
3. The field guide project could be presented in class view in an online gallery.

Birds are returning from their southern winter habitats to Manitoba in the spring. Observe two different bird species and compare and contrast their characteristics: size, shape, colour, flight, movement, feeding behaviour. Research the birds to find out nesting habitat, and other important facts.

[FortWhyte Alive Bird Identification Key](#)

[All About Birds: Online Bird Guide](#)



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Invertebrates can be observed by creating a simple trap. Have the student dig a hole in the dirt large enough for a plastic cup or coffee mug (painted porcelain is quite slippery and works well). Place the mug in the hole and fill in the spaces around it with dirt so that insects or spiders might walk over the edge and fall in. Leave the pitfall trap out overnight during warm weather. Identify the insects before releasing them.

[FortWhyte Alive Grassland Invertebrate Key](#)

Plants are everywhere around us, but we don't always take the time to look closely and determine what is growing steadily in our own backyard. A simple plant identification key can help us learn more about the diversity around us, and challenge us to understand some new scientific words.

[FortWhyte Alive Plant Identification Key](#)

[Manitoba Native Tree Guide](#)