

15. MR. ARTHROPOD'S NEIGHBORHOOD

Overview: Students will create booklets that include student made descriptions, drawings and explanations of where arthropods live within the Garden.

Objective: Students will identify arthropods that inhabit the Yuma Conservation Garden as well as become familiar with their immediate surroundings.

Time needed: 1 to 2 trips of two hours each. Visits are best scheduled when the temperature is around 80-85° to ensure maximum animal activity.

Group Size: 2-3

Age appropriateness: 4th Grade and up

Site: Prepare a variety of sites with grids or quadrants.

Background: Arthropods are a group of invertebrate animals that have jointed limbs and include insects and spiders. Arthropods are dependent upon the physiological adaptations and equipment the animal possesses, their survival needs and the limiting factors of the area. Arthropods are usually found around desert vegetation and rock masses. Students need to approach them with **caution** as some arthropods can bite.

Materials:

Provided at the Garden

Easy Field Guide to Common Desert Insects and others available

Garden Maps

Desert Rat Packs

Clipboards

Provided by the classroom teacher

Additional Field Guides

Paper and pencils

Preparation: Class needs to be prepared with good habitat maintenance skills.

Pre Activity: Students need to be instructed in how to explore an arthropod's home without endangering the animal, its habitat or themselves. General knowledge about arthropods should be studied with videos, posters, etc.

Procedure:

1. Divide the class into groups and assign each a different area of the Garden to explore.
2. Have students draw and describe basic features of arthropods they find in their area. Include items such as number of legs, pincers, color, segments, etc.
3. With the animal description, there should also be information about vegetation and land features in the immediate vicinity.
4. Hold a class discussion to share and display their discoveries.
5. Direct students back to their areas to evaluate and adapt their previous findings.

6. After returning to the classroom, have each group produce a booklet that identifies the arthropods they found.

Modifications:

Extensions: Video tape arthropods for students to write an accompanying narrative to help teach other students about what they learned.

Reference List:

Discovering Deserts, Nature Scope

Assorted Field Guides

Arizona Resource Guide for Environmental Education

Time of Year: When the daytime temperatures average 80-85°.

**This activity was adapted from the Arizona Resource Guide for Environmental Education.