

Creepy Creature Capture



Objectives

Students will be able to identify various insects they capture in a jar.

Materials

- wide-mouth jar
- sheet of foil
- hand shovel
- banana or apple pieces local insect field guide(s) copies of Creepy Creatures Capture funsheet
- pencils

Action

1. Begin a discussion about local insects. Can students name species? Describe species' habitats? Make a common list of insect names on an overhead or on the board. Distribute insect field guides and have students add names of other insects they might have seen. Earmark pages of insects in the field guides for later reference.
2. Divide class into student groups. Describe the experiment to capture insects in a jar using fruit "bait." Discuss and choose sites for capture. The sites may be at school or at home.
3. Distribute the Creepy Creature Capture funsheet. Have each group write a brief description of the habitat at the capture site. Make predictions on which insects will be captured.
4. At the capture site, place the fruit in the jar, and dig a hole so that the top of the jar is ground level. Bury the jar, making sure the dirt comes to the top lip of the open jar mouth .
5. Record the time of day and weather on the funsheet. Students may also take a picture or sketch collection site.
6. Have students return to capture site 24 to 48 hours later. Remove jar and cover mouth with foil.
7. Using field guides, students should be able to identify insects captured in the jar. Record number and species on the funsheet. Unidentifiable species can be brought back into the classroom.
8. In a class discussion, have each student group present their results. Tally final numbers on the board or on the overhead. Identify any "mystery" species. Were any animals captured not insects (snails, slugs, spiders, or others)?

Deeper Depths

Use collected data to examine species distribution according to habitat. Did some species appear only in one type of habitat? Did others appear in all habitats? Graph results. Assign two or three insect species to a student group for them to collect mor information. Use the Internet or library references to find state or nationwide distribution, life cycle, prey and/or effects on humans (crops, houses, etc.)