FAMILY ACTIVITY

PROJECT LEARNING TREE®

Nature is a great teacher, and getting kids outside to learn and play is good for their brains and their bodies. Try this outdoor activity from Project Learning Tree®—it's safe, fun, and educational!

FALLEN LOG

Discover microhabitats, communities, and diverse life by observing fallen logs.

It's amazing how many things live in and on rotting logs. In this activity, kids become familiar with some of those organisms by observing fallen logs. They'll learn how decomposition takes place and gain a better appreciation for microhabitats and communities.

Start by taking a walk in the woods with the children in your life. Look for a fallen log or rotting tree stump. Conduct a thought exercise by asking, "What happens to a tree after it dies?" Investigate the answer by using powers of observation:

- How did the tree die and how long has it been dead?
- Are there signs of animals, including insects, in, on, or around the log? How about plants?
- How are they interconnected?
- Where do these living things get the nutrients they need to survive?

Be careful not to disturb the habitat as you observe. You could use a digital camera—or sketchbook—to record pictures of anything you see. Use field guides or the internet to identify and research them later. Finally, brainstorm ways in which the forest ecosystem benefits from the fallen log you examined.

For a children's story book that illustrates many creatures a child could find under a fallen log, see Around One Log: Chipmunks, Spiders, and Creepy Insiders by Anthony Fredericks, published by Dawn Publications, 2011, ISBN: 1584691387.

CONNECT KIDS TO NATURE!

Encourage your child's school to incorporate outdoor learning by connecting with your local PLT program.

Visit plt.org/yourstate

FOREST FACT

Did you know that the closer trees get to the equator, the faster they grow? In fact, growth rings in tropical areas are often associated with wet and dry seasons, instead of with the four standard seasons. This means that some tropical trees show multiple growth rings in one year!

MICROHABITAT WORD SEARCH

Discover some important components in a microhabitat.

M	N	D	F	S	J	M	W	K	U	S	D	Z	L	U
M	M	I	U	I	J	T	I	O	E	A	N	T	F	S
Q	I	N	N	C	F	V	T	L	O	U	O	B	G	P
S	T	S	G	O	B	E	E	E	L	D	I	R	T	I
O	E	E	I	M	X	S	J	K	W	I	M	T	A	D
I	N	C	G	R	E	C	Y	C	L	E	P	N	M	E
L	J	T	Q	H	A	B	I	T	A	T	O	E	T	R
M	B	E	E	T	L	E	M	S	W	Z	M	E	D	S
D	E	C	O	M	P	O	S	I	T	I	O	N	I	E
M	T	V	M	D	C	C	M	O	I	S	T	F	Z	R

Ant
Bee
Beetle
Decomposition
Dirt
Fungi
Habitat
Insect
Millipede
Mite
Moist
Recycle
Soil
Spiders
Wood

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Visit plt.org for more!