



BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION SHEET

Do You Know?

There are millions of different living things that exist and inhabit planet Earth. This wide variety of living things is called Biodiversity.

The mixture of animals, plants, microorganisms, as well as the variety of ecosystems such as deserts, coral reefs and rainforests all add to the biological diversity that exists on Earth.

All living things depend on each other to survive, and some species have a BIG impact on the food that we eat.

Did you know that one third of ALL of our fruit and vegetables would not exist without all of the pollinators that visit flowers (CNN, 2000).

Bees are pollinators, and they are responsible for the existence of over 130,000 plants that live on our planet (Leidig, 2007).

Facts and Figures

Coral reefs have the most diversity of all ecosystems on planet Earth.

About 0.1% species are lost EVERY year.

98% of all living organisms in Madagascar cannot survive anywhere else on Earth. Madagascar is known as a biodiversity hotspot.

If the biodiversity in an ecosystem is high then the ecosystem will be able to recover quickly from any disasters.

Scientists estimate that species extinctions are happening 100–1000 times faster than what they would without human influence.

Why is Biodiversity Important?

Biodiversity is extremely important and ensures the continuation of life within an environment.

Every living thing on planet Earth is connected in some way to other living things, as if a giant spider web exists between them. If one species becomes endangered or extinct for example, it will effect all of the other species, including humans. For example, if fishermen started hunting all of the whales, then the killer whales would run out of prey to catch. They would then hunt seals and otters. Without seals and otters, sea urchins would increase and would destroy all of the kelp. Fish use kelp as protection for their young, and without protection the fish population would decrease. This means that the fishermen would have no fish to catch, so people would have less food to eat and the oceans would start to become unhealthy.

Biodiversity ensures that there is a healthy balance in the web of life.

10 Easy Ways To Increase Biodiversity

- 1) **Create 'green areas' by planting different types of flowers and trees**
- 2) **Make bug and bee houses in gardens and open spaces**
- 3) **Buy and eat organic food**
- 4) **Reduce your use of harmful cleaning products**
- 5) **Compost any left over food waste**
- 6) **Buy sustainably sourced seafood**
- 7) **Reduce, reuse and recycle**
- 8) **Reduce your use of pesticides and fertilisers used for any garden or green space**
- 9) **Volunteer with local conservation projects**
- 10) **Educate others on the importance of Biodiversity**



LEADING A NATURE TRAIL

A nature trail is a brilliant way to introduce children to the variety of plant and animal life that exists in the environment around them.

This could take place in any area, regardless of size as micro-trails can be a fun activity for children to see how many different types of leaves, creatures, and plants they can see in any given space.

This can then be extended to larger areas if the space is available with questions being asked such as 'What do you see?', 'What do you hear?', 'How are they the same?', 'How are they different?', 'Why are they here?'

There are limitless questions that children can be asked in a nature walk, and anything from colours, shapes, sounds, textures and numbers can be incorporated.

Resources Required

Magnifying glasses

Identification cards

Activity

Many children love the outdoors, and leading a nature trail is an excellent opportunity to increase their understanding of the world around them.

Outfit children in suitable clothing to undertake a fun walk in nature.

Bring along identification cards and magnifying glasses, and point out any and all species along the way that the children can get close to and observe. Questions can be asked, and drawing or story telling can be carried out that links the walk together once the children are indoors.



0—2 SUGGESTIONS

Whilst on a nature trail with younger children, allow them sensorial opportunities for smelling, touching, hearing outdoors. Try to have prams front facing to promote communication and shared experiences. The use of slings should be promoted in order to allow younger children to take part in nature walks.