

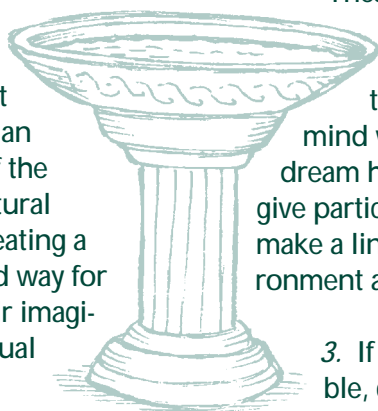


Dream Habitat

ACTIVITY

Background:

When creating a wildlife habitat site, it is important to design a space with both wildlife and people in mind. While each habitat site is unique, all sites share some common features. These features include plants, soil, nutrients, sun, water, access (pathways/places for people), and a basic design plan. No matter what size or type of wildlife habitat site your group is creating, it is important to sketch out a basic plan that takes advantage of the available space and natural resources at hand. Creating a dream habitat is a good way for participants to use their imagination to begin the actual design process.



group to a nearby botanical garden, community garden, or a certified Schoolyard Habitats site to give them ideas about their own site.

When visiting a garden or natural area, make sure participants have quiet time to enjoy the place, write in a journal or talk about how they feel when they are there, and what they like about the outdoor area.

These pleasing features are the types of things they will want to have fresh in their mind when they create a dream habitat. This will also give participants a chance to make a link between the environment and how they feel.

3. If a field trip is not feasible, consider sharing some of the wonderful gardening books written for children (depending on the ages in the group). Stories with illustrations of gardens visited by wildlife and children, or that contain a wide variety of garden features, would be ideal. Also consider books which tell stories of the successful transformation of a small area into a flourishing garden, such as City Green, by Dyanne DiSalvo-Ryan or The Garden of Happiness, by Erika Tamar. Other educators might simply choose to have participants close their eyes, while they read a vivid description of a wildlife habitat and all that a visitor might hear, smell, feel and see while there.

Summary:

Participants take time to imagine the possibilities of their habitat project and create an artistic version of their ideas.

Grade Level:

2-8

Time:

1-2 hours

Learning Objectives:

Participants will be able to:

- ◆ Compile and synthesize information collected in prior activities to develop ideas for their habitat site.
- ◆ Create a model wildlife habitat site.
- ◆ Apply their ideas to the design process for their habitat site.

Materials Needed:

- ◆ Graph/drawing/butcher paper
- ◆ Markers/crayons
- ◆ Rulers
- ◆ Pencils/erasers
- ◆ Gardening magazines and catalogs
- ◆ Scissors
- ◆ Glue
- ◆ Various art materials such as craft sticks, cotton balls, etc.

What to Do:

1. Tell participants that for this activity they will imagine the great possibilities of their habitat project, and then they will create an artistic version of their ideas.

2. Before launching into the activity, take some time to trigger participant imagination. The richer and more varied their experience with gardens and wildlife habitats prior to the activity, the more detailed their dream maps will become. Depending on time and resources, take the





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4. After visiting an inspirational outdoor area, participants will be ready to design their dream habitats.

Take participants to the location of their future habitat site to remind them of its size and shape. Give them quiet time to sit in the area, make note of what is currently there and begin thinking about wildlife they would like to see invited into their habitat and new features they would like to see added. Gather participants together and remind them of the four essential components of habitat (food, water, cover, and places to raise young) that must be included in their design. Have them think about other features they might enjoy in the habitat. Encourage participants to design elements that invite humans, including a reading area, benches, or a path.

5. If they went on a field trip, as recommended above, have them review notes and think about the features of the outdoor space they liked. Prior to the activity, find a few library books or magazines for participants to browse through for ideas. Bring in books on garden seating, water or fountains, or on native plants and animals. Many gardening books, even those geared to adults, have beautiful color photos. Have participants browse through

the books and magazines before getting started.

6. Allow participants to make a sketch of the habitat. Then, supply a large variety of art materials so participants can make colorful, 3-D models of their dream habitats. Younger participants can use

butcher paper to create their habitats, while older participants can work to scale on graph paper, if desired.

7. Once their models are completed, have participants give short presentations, noting important or special features of their habitat to the group. You may want to keep track of the features and components that appear most often in their dream habitats.

8. After presentations, guide participants to decide on the most appealing and critical elements that will need to be included. Ask participants to compile a list of the most popular features included in the dream habitat designs. For example, if the majority of the group chose to include a birdbath in the design, this may be something that should be included in the actual site design.

Discuss with the group until they come to a consensus (or majority) on the elements and features from

their dream habitats that should be included in the site design. Have participants refer back to their Vision worksheets (if they used them) and compare their initial thoughts to their current ideas. *How much of the original vision is still there? What has changed, if anything?*

Questions:

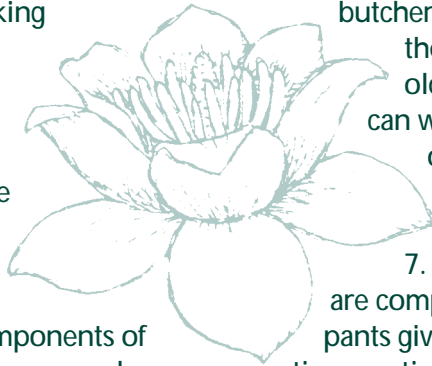
- What features would you like to see in your dream habitat?
- What kinds of animals do you want to attract?
- How will you provide the four habitat elements?

Adaptations:

Refer to general adaptations on pages 11-16. See field trip safety suggestions on pages 17-18.

Hearing Disabilities:

- Give the sign language interpreter a copy of any books you will be reading to the class ahead of time so they have time to prepare.
- Encourage participants to actively participate in the discussion. Allow participants who have difficulty speaking to use the interpreter to give their presentations to the group.
- Follow appropriate field trip precautions. Have a set meeting place in case anyone gets separated from the group.





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- Position yourself and the interpreter so that participants can see you in the field.

Learning/Cognitive Disabilities:

- Briefly review habitat elements and give examples of each.
- Provide gardening magazines and/or catalogs so that participants who have difficulty drawing can cut out pictures and enhance their dream habitats.
- Encourage participants to actively participate in the discussion.

Motor Disabilities:

Overall:

- Choose an accessible site for the field trip.

For participants with limited muscle strength, coordination, or dexterity of the hands:

- Build up the handles of pencils or markers with bandage material or foam as needed. Use large crayons for younger participants.
- Provide gardening magazines and/or catalogs that participants who have difficulty drawing can cut pictures from to enhance their dream habitats.
- Have adaptive scissors and large glue sticks available.
- Have some pre-cut pictures for participants to choose from as needed.

Visual Disabilities:

Overall:

- For the outdoor portion, use vivid words to describe the natural area to help stir participants' imaginations. Describe colors, textures, smells, and sounds. Encourage partners to work with participants to explore the site.
- If possible, use hands-on examples to illustrate habitat site components.
- Have partners assist as needed.

For participants with low vision:

- Provide paper, clipboards, and black markers for participants to take notes while outside.
- Have a variety of magnifiers available.

For participants who are blind:

- Provide small tape recorders for participants to take notes while outside as needed.