



LEARNING ABOUT HABITATS AT THE CONSERVATORY

Ohio has four major habitats: forests, prairies, wetlands, and the great lakes. There are smaller habitats within these four: streams, caves, thickets, tree cavity, and underground.

You can find fun things to do at the Conservatory to learn more about habitats in the Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation Childrens Garden.

Two outstanding tree-top roosts await: Mulberry Perch, at ten feet above the ground, and Hammock Lounge, at thirteen feet above the ground.

These twin destinations are the highest points along the Children's Garden journey. Artistically-designed and laser-cut metal railing panels populate the Canopy Walk, bringing the story of Ohio's native animals and plants, and its ever-changing seasons to the forefront.



OHIO FOREST HABITAT

There are many different habitats found around the world, we are going to focus on forest habitats in Ohio. Forests have different layers: forest floor, shrub layer, understory layer, and the canopy layer.



FOREST LAYERS	WHAT WILL YOU FIND?
THE FOREST FLOOR	ferns, wildflowers, and tree seedlings
SHRUB LAYER	different types of shrubs
UNDERSTORY	smaller trees like dogwood
CANOPY	where all the tallest trees are found

MAKE AN OHIO FOREST LAYERS DIORAMA

Materials needed:

- 🌿 shoebox or tissue box
- 🌿 twigs / sticks
- 🌿 grass/moss
- 🌿 ferns
- 🌿 rocks
- 🌿 crayons/markers
- 🌿 scissors
- 🌿 glue or tape



Use your collected materials to recreate the layers of the forest inside the shoe box.

For more information on trees in Ohio and Ohio Forests visit:
forestry.ohiodnr.gov.

TREE & THICKET HABITAT

Let's talk about Ohio's State bird, the Northern Cardinal. What type of habitat do you think it would live in? Do you think it would nest on the ground or in a tree? What food would it eat?

Northern Cardinals live near woodland edges, thickets, and suburban gardens in these areas they look for seeds, insects, and berries to eat. These birds nest in dense shrubs, vines, or low trees. Nests are usually placed about 3'-10' above ground, and sometimes nests can be found higher than that. They make their nest from twigs, weeds, bark strips, leaves, and line it with grass or hair.



Now let's go on a journey!

- 🌿 Explore the outdoors, this could be your yard, neighborhood, or nearby park and see if you can find a bird nest or bird habitat.
- 🌿 Once you have found a nest or habitat, observe it for 2 minutes
- 🌿 Now take a picture or draw and describe what you observed in your journal
- 🌿 Make sure you use descriptive words: bright red, brown twigs with green leaves

MAKE A BIRDS NEST ACTIVITY

Materials needed:

- 🌿 twigs
- 🌿 leaves
- 🌿 grass
- 🌿 moss
- 🌿 string
- 🌿 pine needles

Questions to ask yourself while constructing a bird nest:

1. How strong is the bird nest?
2. Can the bird nest stay together during a windy day?
3. Will water collect inside the nest or will it drain?
4. Will the bird adults and young be comfortable?

For more information about Northern Cardinals visit:
allaboutbirds.org/guide/Northern_Cardinal

WETLAND & STREAM HABITAT

The term “Ecosystem Engineers” is what comes to mind when I think about our next adventure! Beavers are found throughout North America around freshwater lakes, ponds, rivers, marshes, and swamps.

They build dams out of weaving branches together, cutting down trees with their teeth, and waterproofing the construction with mud. Then they build their lodge or hut next to the dam out of sticks, rocks, and mud.

This construction has an underway way for them to get into the lodge or hut. Beavers eat leaves, roots, and bark from trees, they prefer aspen, willow, poplar, and maple trees and also eat aquatic plants.



BUILD A BEAVER DAM

Materials needed:

- 🌿 soil
- 🌿 water
- 🌿 sticks
- 🌿 rocks
- 🌿 small bucket mix the soil and water (mud)
- 🌿 a plastic container to construct your build



In your yard gather the above materials and then see if you can use these materials to construct a dam or lodge-like beavers do.

Here are some helpful tips:

Mud is used as glue, it helps hold the sticks, rocks, and other materials in place.

Mud also helps with holding water back, it acts as a sealant



Questions to ask yourself while constructing a beaver dam:

1. Would the dam hold back running water?
2. Are there any leaks in the dam?
3. Does the dam hold back water but water runs over the top?
4. What adjustments can be made to make the dam better?

For additional information visit:

ohiodnr.gov

UNDERGROUND HABITAT

Did you know that there are more than 12,000 species of ants all over the world? Also, that ants can lift 20 times their body weight, that means that if a second grader were as strong as an ant they could pick up a car! When ants are out foraging for food they leave a pheromone trail so they know where they have been. Ants use their feet to hear, this is done through vibrations that they feel in the ground. Ants live in colonies and these colonies can be all shapes and sizes. In these colonies there can be a few species of about a dozen ants or the average colony contains thousands of individual ants.



SCIENTIFIC OBSERVATION

Materials needed:

- 🌿 paper/notebook
- 🌿 Pencil
- 🌿 crayons or markers



- 🌿 Go outside and pick a spot where you notice an ant hill, sit and observe the ant hill for about 5-10 mins.
- 🌿 Now, what did you see? What were the ants doing?
- 🌿 Did any of the ants come out of the hill?
- 🌿 As you make observations make sure to write down what you see the ants doing.
- 🌿 The more information you have the easier it will be to create your story about ants.
- 🌿 Lastly, make a story book about the ants that you observed.
- 🌿 Make sure to be as detailed as possible.

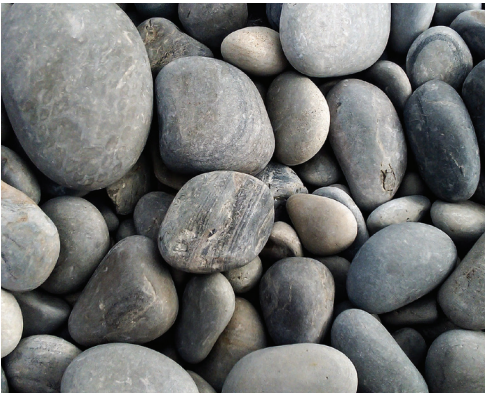


If you would like to see an example, go to the link below and watch the short video.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0_IMmFdu4o

HABITATS ARE EVERYWHERE

A habitat is an environment where an organism or population naturally lives. This environment provides the needs for survival, food, water, shelter, and space. Each species has a niche, the niche is the role the species plays, including what type of food it eats and where it lives. What would be a frog's niche? It would be that a frog eats insects and lives in ponds or in water.



SCAVENGER HUNT

This activity will have you exploring outside in your neighborhood of a nearby park, maybe even your own backyard.

Find the following:

- 🌿 pond or stream
- 🌿 bird nest in a tree
- 🌿 a tree that is at least 2 ft in diameter
- 🌿 an evergreen tree (pine tree)
- 🌿 a rock
- 🌿 a vine
- 🌿 leaves on the ground
- 🌿 grassy area - space without trees or shrubs
- 🌿 decaying log or leaves
- 🌿 hollow log or hole in a tree



Once you have found at least 5 of the 10 items. Then you should pick one and draw it in your journal.