



Forest Detectives: Bug Buddies Scavenger Hunt

Elementary / Middle School (also a good "buddy" class activity) (Ages 5-12)

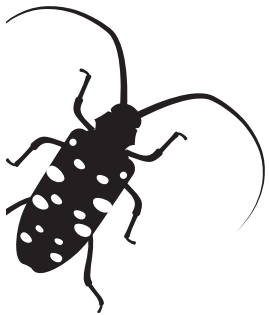
Students look for things in a forested area that highlight biodiversity and change, explore the insects that live there, and understand that most insects are important to forests and are not harmful.

Materials:

- *Forest Detective Scavenger Hunt* sheets (1 set per pair)
- clipboards, pencils (1 set per pair)
- A wooded area with a diversity of trees and shrubs
- Photos of some common insects and some invasive insects (e.g lady bug, ant, bees, moths / Emerald Ash borer, Asian longhorn beetle)

Instructions:

1. Students will go on a scavenger hunt to look for things in a forested area that highlight biodiversity and change. They will look for agents of change that alter forests and explore the insects that live in or on trees and shrubs, and the wildlife that feed on them. The activity helps heighten observation skills and stresses the importance of the range of insects that live in a forest. It is important to remind students that most insects are important and not harmful, an important distinction when studying invasive insects!
2. **Discussion:** Before heading out, discuss some of the things that might cause a forest to change. Prompt students if they have seen trees or branches blown down in a storm, the result of fires, flooding, logging and insect infestations. Ask if anyone has seen a dead or dying tree, and let students know these are called "wildlife trees". Ask students why they might be called this (dead and dying trees provide food, shelter, and habitat for dozens of different animals!) Many insects live on or in dead trees, and are a critical food source for wildlife such as woodpeckers, salamanders, bears and bats.
3. Pass around some photos of insects and explain that there are some insects that have been introduced – such as the emerald ash borer and the Asian longhorn beetle – that are very destructive to trees. Stress that most insects are very helpful and are an important part of the forest ecosystem. Tell the group that they will be working in pairs to explore the wooded area and find as many insects and signs of change as they can.
4. **Outside:** explain the rules and boundaries for the scavenger hunt. Explain that the students are not to pick anything, leave things the way they found them, stay on trails to prevent erosion, and point out physical boundaries (explain where the group can go). This is a good activity to do in partnership with an older group of students, if you are working with young children.
5. Point out examples of native plants and trees in the area, and ask students where they think insects might be hiding?
6. Have the students work in pairs to search and record what they find: they can check off items or draw them. After they have had enough time to explore and search an area, gather the students together and discuss their findings.





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Wildlife tree (a dead or dying tree)	Branches that have been blown down by the wind	A plant with a chewed leaf
An insect on a plant	A crawling insect	A flying insect
A spider	A nurse log (a fallen tree lying on the forest floor)	A mushroom or fungus



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<p>A fallen log or large branch with holes in its bark</p>	<p>A seed</p>	<p>A seedling or baby tree</p>
<p>A woodpecker hole</p>	<p>Holes made by a sapsucker – a type of woodpecker (Hint: holes in rows)</p>	<p>A hole that a bird might be able to live in</p>
<p>A nest</p>	<p>A hole that may have been made by an insect</p>	

