



HUMBER ARBORETUM ECO CENTRE ECOSYSTEMS



INTERESTING FACTS

- ✦ Canada is fortunate to be home to more than 1,270,000 square kilometres (127 million hectares) of wetlands. That's nearly 25 per cent of all the wetlands on Earth!
- ✦ In North America prior to European colonization, Algonquian, Iroquois, and other Native American people regularly cleared areas of forest to create temporary meadows where deer could find nutrition and be hunted.
- ✦ Forests cover a huge part of our nation, 417 million hectares to be exact. And according to studies done by the United Nations, they're getting bigger, by close to 9,000 hectares in the first half of the 90s.
- ✦ The Humber river flows through the most densely populated area of Canada but still retains many of its natural and cultural values.
- ✦ Within the 250 acres of the Humber Arboretum there are 5 distinct ecosystems including forest, meadow, river, ponds, and wetlands.
- ✦ White tailed deer, beaver, muskrat, fox, coyote, great horned owl, cottontail rabbit, snapping turtles, mink, and groundhogs are just a few of the different species found in some of these Ecosystems.

COOL ACTIVITIES

FOOD WEB GAME

- ✦ Using large cue cards write a whole bunch of different things you can find in nature (Maple trees, grass, worm, beetle, robin, toad, frog, hawk, soil, sun, humans, water) make sure you can use actual names like maple tree whenever possible (Each student will get a card so you need to think of that many things in nature)
- ✦ You will also need a big ball of yarn!
- ✦ Hand a card to each student and start by choosing a student who will hold the yarn first.
- ✦ This student will look at their card and choose a student who is holding a card that is somehow connected in nature to their card.
- ✦ For example if I start out with a card that says robin I would look for someone who is holding the worm card because I eat worms, or maybe someone holding a maple tree card because that is where I build a nest...
- ✦ Once they have chosen the card that is connected to theirs they roll the ball of yarn to that person. Then that person picks someone connected to their card and rolls the ball of yarn to them. Soon you will have a huge web and can explain that even though we can't always see it everything in nature is connected!

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is an ecosystem? (ANS: A complex system of interaction between living organisms and their non-living environment.)
2. What common wetland plant was very important to first nations people? (ANS: The cattail has many different uses; the flower and roots can be eaten, the leaves are used for weaving and the fluffy seeds can be used for stuffing things such as moccasins or as an absorbent material.)
3. What is the largest ecosystem located within the Humber Arboretum? (ANS: The meadow is the largest ecosystem within the Humber Arboretum and is home to many different animals including the fox, coyote, cottontail rabbit, and mink.)
4. Why would predators like fox and coyote prefer to hunt their prey in the meadow instead of the forest? (ANS: Forest terrain is much more difficult for fox or coyote to walk in and they do not have as much cover down low for stalking. The meadow however has a very dense cover of grasses and low growing shrubs which is perfect for sneaking up on prey!)

