

## I Like Plants

Even when I was very young, I always loved plants. When we walked to school, I would look at the different plants. I would make up names for them. I would draw pictures of them. When my teacher asked us to draw a picture of anything we liked, I always drew pictures of plants.

When I got to high school, I took a course that was all about plants. Most students took the course in biology. But I took the course on plants. We went into the park and identify different species. It was amazing to find that there were at least 27 different kinds of plants in our neighborhood park. In fact, there were about 12 different kinds of trees. Some were deciduous. We were there in spring, so they had their leaves.

I learned that weeds are not really bad plants. They are interlopers. They come from another environment. Somehow they get to the new environment. It could be that animals bring them. The animals might pick up the seeds on their fur and carry them to the new habitat. Then they fall off and start to grow.

When I went to college, I knew that I wanted to study plants. I wanted to work in a career in which I would be a plant scientist. I wanted to be a botanist. I took courses in math, English, and history. They were good courses. But it was the science courses I loved.

Now I am teaching at a college. I am teaching about plant life. I explain how fertilizers can help plants grow but also can destroy the balance of nature. I teach about helpful insects. One of the most helpful insects for plants is the ladybug. Ladybugs are small insects that eat aphids. They can protect plants by eating the aphids that would eat the plants' leaves. There are about 5,000 kinds of ladybugs. In winter the ladybug hibernates. Then in spring it comes back out and starts to protect the plants again. Several states have named the ladybug their state insect.

I teach about ecology, too. I explain that if you introduce a non-native herbivore into an environment it can cause problems. For example, in Australia long ago people brought rabbits. The rabbits ate so many plants that they caused a problem. This invasive species ate plants that other animals depended on. The rabbits even killed trees. They ate the bark off the trees, and the trees died. Some people think that Australia's desert has expanded significantly because of the introduction of the rabbits. They say it is a very big problem.

I keep learning more about plants and the animals that depend on them. I like being a teacher because I am always learning more. I learn from my research on the Internet now as well as going to the park and studying the plants in my community.

CCSSR1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

*These are questions you can ask and answer about any story. Write your answers on another page.*

1. Sequence: Which event happened first? Which happened last?
2. Character Traits: Name one character. What is one trait you infer that character has? Explain why you think that.
3. Motive: What is something that person does? Why do you think that person does that?
4. Summarize: Summarize the story in four sentences. Tell about the characters and what they do.
5. Main Idea: What do you think is the main idea of the story?