

GEN Journaling: Invasion!

Essential Question(s):

How are invasive species impacting Earth's ecosystems?

At a Glance:

Learners will write a journal entry about the 'Invasion' of an invasive plant.

Background Information:

Information about Invasive species can be found throughout the Pest & Disease Control module, particularly Lessons 3 and 4.

See *How to Make a Nature Journal* in the Ecosystem Module for further background information and instructions on how to make a nature journal.

Procedure:

1. Discuss the problem facing ecosystems when invasive plant species are introduced (loss of habitat, competition, endangerment, and extinction).
2. Give a brief overview of the 'Invasion!' journal entry.
3. Allow learners to find a quiet place outside with their journals and/or 'Invasion!' worksheet. To start, have learners record the date, time, and surroundings of their journal entry.
4. Give learners time to read through and complete the journaling activity (15-20 minutes).
5. Gather learners back together and allow those who want to share to discuss their journal entries.

Discussion:

- What is an invasive species?
- Can you name a few invasive plants that you have seen around your home or schoolyard?
- What impact do invasive species (plants and animals) have on ecosystems?
- How can we prevent plants and animals from becoming invasive?

Location: Classroom and outdoors

Objectives: *Learners will*

- 1) explore creative aspects of journaling,
- 2) understand the negative impact of invasive plant introduction.

Skills: reflection, creative and technical writing, questioning, expression, perception

Supplies:

- Journal or 'Invasion!' worksheet
- Pencil or pen

Subjects: science, language arts, art.

Time: 20 minutes

Invasion!

Invasive plants are often introduced for positive reasons. Whether it was for erosion control, beauty, or a food source for animals, the people that brought them here did not mean any harm. Unfortunately, plants from other countries often do not react well in their non-native habitats. They take over habitats of our native plants and can grow out of control. Invasive plants are often partially responsible for plants becoming endangered. Kudzu, privet, and honeysuckle are some invasive plants that most people are familiar with. Imagine that you are a native plant; happy living in your own habitat, then an invasive species is introduced. Maybe you get along well at first, both sharing your area of land. Or maybe this "big, bad" plant is scary from the very beginning. Write a story about the experience of a native plant being taken over by an invasive plant. Alternatively, write a story about an exotic animal that has become invasive and predated native species into decline or caused other problems.

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