

What Happened to the Merriblossoms?

Essential Question(s):

How are habitats destroyed?

Do numbers of people affect the numbers of animals and plants?

At a Glance: Learners are introduced to the concept of species endangerment and its many causes, especially habitat destruction, guided in exploring ways to improve this issue on their school site.

Background Information: There are many reasons why plants endangered: loss of habitat, invading plants, changes in climate or wild collecting and over harvesting, pesticides, pollution, disease, road vehicles. A habitat is an area that provides an animal or plant adequate food, water, shelter, and living space in a suitable arrangement. It is also a place for reproduction. Loss of habitat is main reason that plants and animals are endangered, and it is always caused by human development. When most schools are



constructed, many (or plants and animals are displaced. This activity students to understand species have been displaced from their site, as from the Merriblossoms' site, and gain a better understanding for the need to improve their school site ecosystem by reestablishing native plants.

Location: Indoors

Objectives: *Learners will:*

- 1) discover how habitats disappear.
- 2) display interest in plant habitats and concern about threats to specific plant habitats.

Skills: observation, analysis

Supplies:

- What Happened to the Merriblossoms? Worksheet and Answers

Subjects: science, math

Time: 15 minutes

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Procedures:

1. Discuss the term "habitat" with the students.
2. Give the students each a 'What Happened to the Merriblossoms?' worksheet or project it from the 'Sense of Place' PowerPoint.
3. You may want to read through the picture descriptions with the students.
4. Have the students color the flowers and count the number of Penny Plants.
5. Go over the answers with the students.

What Has Happened To The Merriblossoms?

Answers: Overall, the pictures point out that most animals and plants face problems because people are destroying their homes. This problem is called **loss of habitat**. This has been happening for a long time. Now, there are even more people on our planet, so the demand for space continues to grow and grow. Has this happened on our school site?

Picture 1: This drawing shows a piece of land before it was settled. In Georgia, this would have been before the colonists came from Europe. There is plenty of room for the Merriblossoms, plants, animals, and even the Native Americans.

Picture 2: As shown, unsettled land is usually cleared first to build houses or to plant crops. People need land for food – and as long as there are not too many people, there is still enough land for plants like the Merriblossoms.

Note the planted field. Food plants are generally grown in what are called MONOCULTURES. Mono means one. This means that in a field there will be just one kind of plant. Others – harmful or not – will be destroyed.

Picture 3: When motor cars came, they created a need for paved roads. With more people and more cars, the number of paved roads and parking lots has increased. As more of the earth is covered with pavement, there is less room for plants.

Roads also bring people out of crowded cities into the countryside. People clear land for houses and other buildings. Usually, they want lawns around their buildings. Grass lawns take space away from the native plants. In this picture, there is very little space left for the Merriblossoms.

Picture 4: In time, more and more of the land is taken up. Businesses – stores and factories – follow people and houses into the countryside. Few people think about the need to leave some land for the native animals and plants like the Merriblossoms. They have no place to live.

Discussion/Assessment:

Why are some problems that plants face?

Has this happened on our site?

What can we do to help the plants and animals on or near our site?

Insert Merriblossoms worksheet