

MAGICAL BACKYARD SQUARE



Discover the amazing natural world that exists in your own backyard! With just a few tools, you can explore the rich soil and critters that call it home.

Materials:

- Yardstick
- Magnifying lens
- Old newspaper
- Gloves
- Pan to hold things
- Brush to sweep away dirt
- Small shovel or trowel
- Notebook
- Pencil or pen



Instructions:

1. Begin the activity by taking your yardstick and using a twig to draw a square in the earth, making it the length of the stick on each side. Next, use your magnifying lens to observe the insects and worms which are crawling, hopping or even flying on your square. Look for different kinds of leaves, ants, caterpillars, butterflies, insects, spider webs and birds. Report all your findings in your notebook and draw pictures of what you have seen.
2. Rather than draw the leaves you find, create a leaf rubbing by placing a leaf between two sheets of paper on a hard surface and then, using a crayon or pencil, rub back and forth on the upper sheet. A print of the leaf will appear.
3. Once you have recorded everything you see on the ground surface, it is time to start digging. Spread out the newspaper to hold the soil, so you can return it to the square once you are done. Check for earthworms and other buried treasures lying beneath the surface.
4. Return to your square several times during the year to see how it and its inhabitants have changed. Every time you work in your square, record the date, time and weather in your notebook. This activity can last for as long as you like!