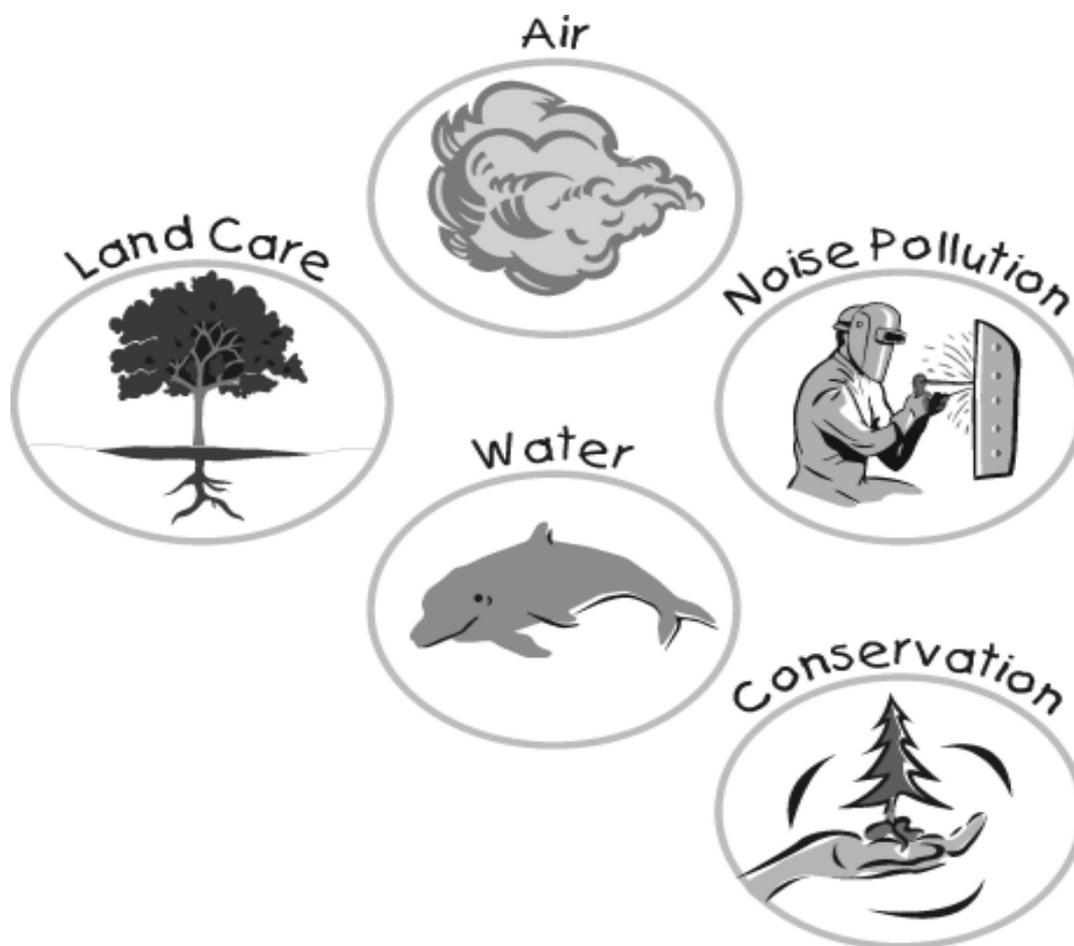


## Integrated Themes for 4-8 Year Olds

# The Environment



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# Introduction

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From birth children begin interacting with their environment. Even young children can learn about the environment and how to play their part in its care and conservation. Naturally, you need to keep the concepts simple for younger children.

## Learning Outcomes

*The students will:*

- Demonstrate an awareness of how people interact with the environment; how this can be an adverse interaction and how we can play a part in conservation through a variety of activities;
- Practise and consolidate previously learned skills and learn new skills.

## General Concepts

- Everything we do has an effect on our environment.
- People have caused pollution and other problems which have had an adverse effect on the environment.
- It is possible to reverse the damage to the environment but everyone must co-operate and we must act now.
- The effects of miscare are influencing the health and welfare of people worldwide.

## Evaluation

The minute you start the first discussion on the environment you can start evaluating students' knowledge of the topic.

Formative evaluation should begin at this stage and continue throughout the program. Knowledge and understandings and skills can be evaluated during discussions, practical activities and written work.

The summative (final) evaluation should be only a small part of the evaluation. This time is often stressful for the children who have to work their way through test after test, and for the teacher who has to make and record the results of all these tests. This need not be!

Use anecdotal recording throughout the program plus a checklist of the concepts and the skills you are planning to teach and/or consolidate. Then the summative evaluation will be the icing on the cake when you hopefully discover how far each child has progressed.

Use sheets for this section of evaluation similar to those used throughout the program. Include discussions and even drama, gardening activities and art and craft as part of your evaluation. Even games have a place here – those which involve classifying are ideal. For younger children sorting boxes which contain a variety of material could prove very useful here.



## Section 1:

# Land Care

### □ Introduction

The key word here is simplicity. If your message is informative yet simple you'll have a room of little "greenies" in no time.

### □ Learning Outcomes

The students will:

- demonstrate an appreciation of the adverse results of people's interaction with the environment, the ways in which this occurred and the ways in which we can rectify the problem. Evident through participation in discussions and practical activities, satisfactory completion of written work and a positive change in their own behaviour;
- practise and consolidate previously learned skills and learn new skills in all subject areas while completing practical and written activities.

### □ Specific Concepts

**The natural environment includes land, trees, plants and animals.**

- We share our environment with trees, plants and animals which need healthy soil to stay alive.
  - We all have a responsibility to maintain the land in a healthy condition.
  - Pollution affects us as well as the trees, plants and animals.
- Plants, animals and humans sometimes have to adapt to changes in the environment. People often modify their environment.
  - There are many small animals in the soil which are essential if the soil is to remain healthy.
  - Changes to the environment may endanger the continuing existence of many plants and animals. Farms are a source of food and clothing for both city and country dwellers.
  - Trees provide us with many items we need to survive.
  - People are now realising that we have performed actions in the past which have had an adverse effect on the environment but that we still have time to change this.
  - Trees and plants are living things which grow in many different places.
  - Trees and plants are many different sizes with different foliage.
  - Trees and plants provide us with food.
  - Seeds produce new plants.
  - All plants need food, water and light.
  - Animals are living things that make their homes in many places. Animals need food, water, air and shelter to survive.
  - Soil is composed of tiny pieces of stone.
  - We use our five senses to identify a variety of natural substances.

## □ Activity Suggestions

- Let the children smash or rub two soft rocks together to produce soil. The colours of this can be compared and contrasted with samples of soil from the playground.
- Borrow a video or picture pack which shows the effects of land degradation and pollution. Explain how farmers cleared the land in order to grow crops and/or graze animals, the problems this caused (salination, etc. ), the effect of these problems on the soil and plants, and current re-forestation programs in which many farmers are participating.
- Visit ▶ [www.global-garden.com.au/gardenkids\\_grow3.htm](http://www.global-garden.com.au/gardenkids_grow3.htm) for ideas on growing things in the classroom/school grounds.
- Discuss ways in which townspeople destroy the soil – use chemicals (weed killers, fertilisers, etc.), pollution and littering, and the effects of these on the soil.
- Go for a walk in the local community and collect litter. Use this to make a wall mural.
- Identify foods we eat which are grown in the soil and on trees. Discuss the importance of fruits and vegetables in our diet and what could happen if we were unable to grow these.
- Discuss the conditions which cause extinction of animals and ways in which this can be avoided. (See the “Animals” book in this series for more suggestions).
- Discuss the clothes we wear that are produced by plants and animals. Compare pure wool, cotton and leather with synthetic fibres.
- Collect and trace around a variety of leaves on graph paper. These can be used for non-arbitrary measurement of area, coloured or painted, cut out and used for a display.
- Grow some seeds. Let the children record the changes which occur.
- Alfalfa or cress can be eaten with lunch, as can nasturtiums.
- When growing seeds, grow one or two samples in the dark, and do not water some at various stages in their growth. Compare with those which were watered and grown in a sunny position.
- Identify the food eaten by animals which provide us with food. Discuss what would happen if the soil did not produce food for these animals.
- Put flowers, preferably white, into coloured waters to observe the capillary process. Compare with the way trees and plants get water and nutrition from the soil.

Check out for a wealth of lesson plans and ideas:

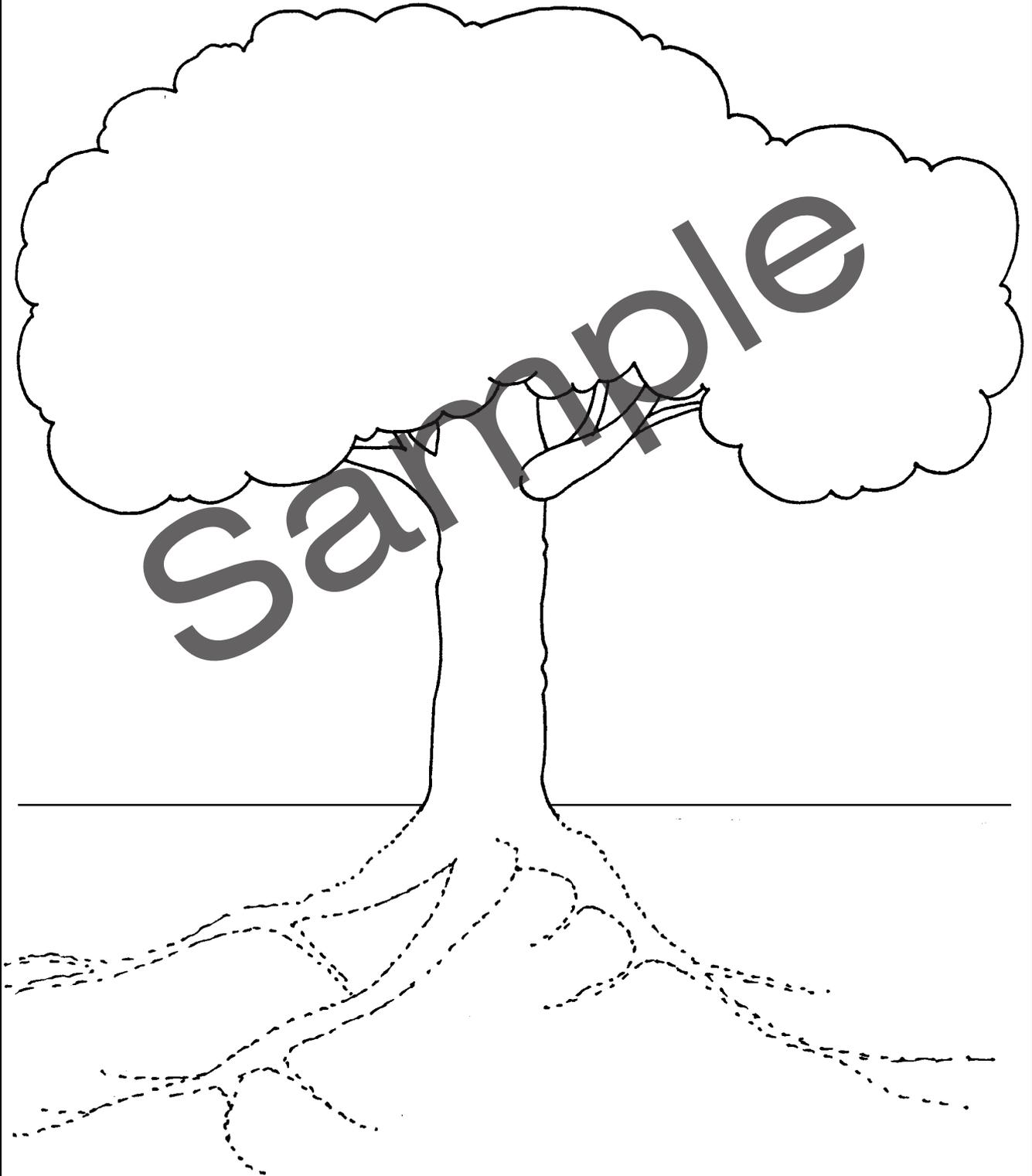
▶ [www.teacherplanet.com/resource/environment.php](http://www.teacherplanet.com/resource/environment.php)

*NB. Conservation may be handled here or as a “finale” to the program. See separate section.*



# Trees and Food

- Draw the foods that we get from trees on the tree below.  
Draw the foods which grow in the soil around the bottom of the tree.





# Trees Help Us

## ■ Write the missing words in this tree story.

Lots of our fruits and nuts grow on trees.

Apples, pears, oranges \_\_\_\_\_  
plums are just some of the fruits.

Our wooden furniture comes \_\_\_\_\_  
trees and so do many doors.

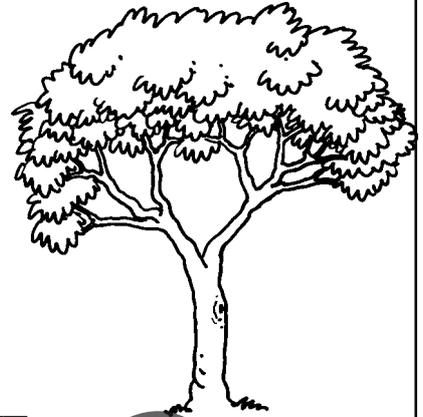
Trees \_\_\_\_\_ home to many animals \_\_\_\_\_  
insects.

Some, like birds and spiders, \_\_\_\_\_ their homes in  
the branches.

\_\_\_\_\_ live on the ground \_\_\_\_\_ the tree.

Trees also provide shade \_\_\_\_\_ hot summer days.

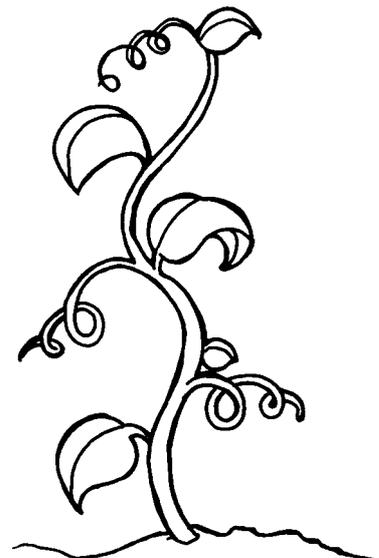
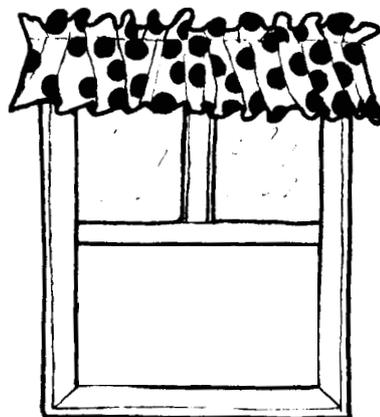
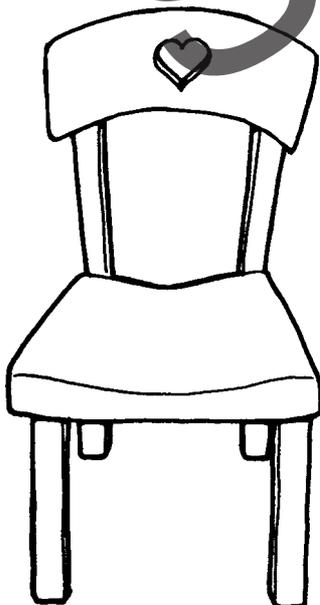
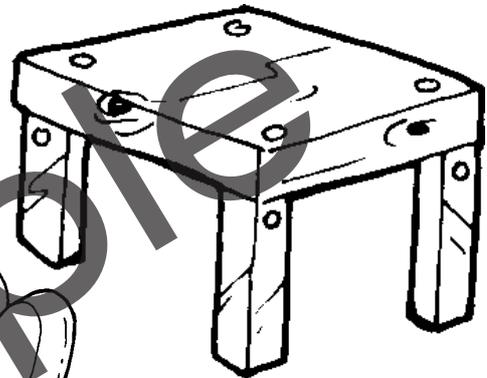
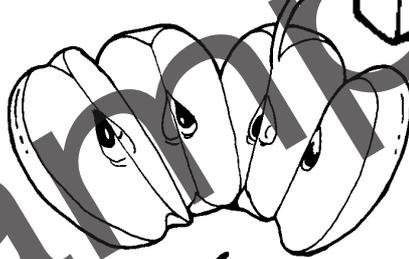
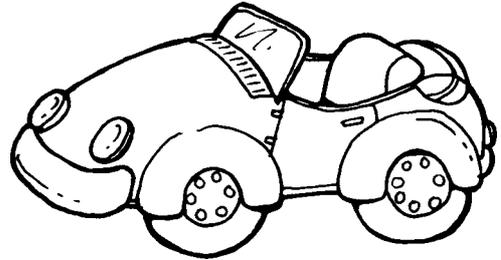
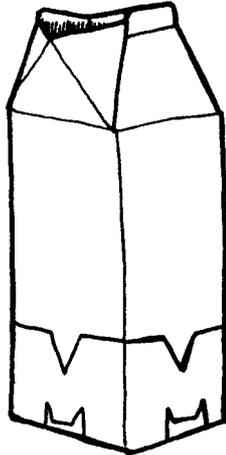
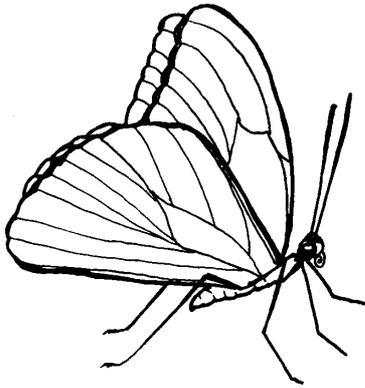
## ■ Draw a picture of your favourite tree here.





# Wooden Things

■ Colour in the pictures of things which are made of wood.  
Put a cross on the things which are not made of wood.



■ On the back of this sheet draw three more things you can see in the classroom which are made of wood.