

Dustbowl – Extra Activity Ideas

This document sets out a number of other activity ideas that you could use that are linked in to the Dustbowl mission explained on the Roots & Shoots website at <http://www.rootnsnshoots.org.uk/blog/category/activities/dustbowl/>

Over time, we will be developing these ideas in to full activity sheets, but in the meantime we thought we would share them with you so you can use them straight away!

The Dustbowl

In the Dustbowl activity set (<http://www.rootnsnshoots.org.uk/blog/category/activities/dustbowl/>), Chrono-bot R00T5 travels to a future where crops have failed leading to dust storms, and Kent is a strange, almost lunar landscape, with little or nothing growing. This has been caused by crop failure due to the disappearance of bees and other pollinating insects. The activities are all about ways in which we can measure what may be happening to insects and other animals, and help them out.

In terms of effects on the environment and people, this scenario closely mirrors that of the North American dustbowl of the 1930s where poor agricultural practice and drought led to a series of devastating dust storms.

More information on this can be found in the Wikipedia article at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dust_Bowl



Extra Activity Ideas

Background Research Activities:

1. Why do plants need insects? What insects contribute to pollination? How many different types can you spot around the school garden/at home?
2. What is biodiversity? Why is it important? Draw a big food web for your classroom wall.

People Activities:

1. Who lives in dusty/low diversity areas today? How do they cope? Write a day in the life story.

Animal Activities:

1. Go for a nature walk and survey all the animals and insects you see. How many different types are there? Where might they fit on your food web (see above). Draw pictures of them.
2. Take a look at NHM Beecam <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/kids-only/naturecams/beecam/index.html> and the ID guide, and take part in Beewatch <http://www.bumblebeeconservationtrust.co.uk/surveys.htm>
3. Why do bees dance? Can you design your own bee dance and get your classmates to find hidden treasure? <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7ijI-g4jHg>



4. Take part in a bug life survey: <http://www.buglife.org.uk/getinvolved/>
5. Build homes for bees!
<http://www.buglife.org.uk/getinvolved/gardening/beenestsforgardeners.htm>

Environment Activities:

1. Grow the same seeds in different conditions (different soils, different amounts of water). How well do they all grow? Why?
2. What kind of plants will grow in a dustbowl? Can you create a drought resistant/'dustbowl' garden in a window box?
3. What's in your garden? Take a look at your garden at home, or the school garden. Can you identify some of the plants? How well will they survive a drought?

