



Ring around plant diversity

Introduction

In a school's grounds there will be many different types of ground cover. There may be lots of grass, creepers, leaf litter, earth or pavement. How diverse are these areas? Is the ground covered with native plants or is it covered by weeds and introduced grasses?

CSF Level

Level 3 and 4

Learning Outcomes

Students will learn a simple technique for investigating weeds in the school ground. Students will use simple maths to estimate weed and other plant cover.

Equipment:

1 hoop per team of 4-5 (a hoop gives you an area approximately 60 cm in diameter)
Magnifying glasses
Writing and recording materials
Tennis ball and racquet (or cricket bat)

Safety Precautions:

Try not to disturb any bees or wasps.
The person who is to hit the ball must stand well clear of the rest of the group. (Give them some room gang).

Procedure:

One person with a tennis racquet stands clear of the group. Another student throws the ball up in a loop to be hit by the racquet. The aim is to hit it high in the air and observe where it lands. This becomes the starting point for your plant survey.

Place the hoop over the spot where the ball first bounced. Be careful not to move the hoop once it is down.

On paper, draw a circle to represent the hoop.
Draw the different types of plants, earth, leaf litter etc seen in the hoop.





If you don't know the names of the plants, label the items as grass 1, grass 2, weed 1, weed 2, native plant, earth, leaf etc

Fill in the chart.

Compare the types of plants that grow in each of the hoops.

Ring around plant diversity

Tally the plants and other items covering the ground in the area of the hoop.
Estimate the percentage or fraction cover for each item.

Type of covering	Tally	Total	Percentage or fraction
Grass 1			
Weed 1			
Leaf 1			
Native 1			
Earth			
Mulch			

