



# LIFE IN THE SIDEWALK CRACKS

## 4-H Natural Science Lesson



**COMPARE PLANT AND ANIMAL LIFE IN DIFFERENT HABITATS  
THIS ACTIVITY SHOULD BE DONE IN THE LATE SPRING,  
SUMMER OR EARLY FALL.**

### Project Skills:

Discover the impact people have on plants and animals

### Life Skills:

Reasoning  
WI Academic Standards:  
Environmental Education C.4.  
Environmental Issue  
Investigation Skills

### Time:

20-25 minutes

### Supplies:

- 1 craft stick per youth
- 4 pieces of white paper per youth
- 1 pencil per youth
- 1 magnifying glass per youth

## WHAT TO DO

### *Explore a sidewalk crack*

1. Find an old and cracked sidewalk, driveway or parking lot.
2. Carefully examine what is in the crack. Look for any plants or animals that are living there.
3. Use a craft stick to scoop out some of the stuff from one of the cracks and put it on a piece of white paper.
4. Divide the material into two groups – human-made objects and natural things. Note which pile has more in it.
5. Carefully examine each pile. Separate the natural things into seeds, soils and animals. Separate the human-made pile into metals, glass, paper and plastic.
6. Use the magnifying glass to look carefully for all the plant and animal life you can find. Pick one or two things and sketch them.

### *Explore a small area of turf such as a lawn*

1. Locate an area covered in grass such as a lawn. Mark off an area approximately 6" x 6".
2. Carefully examine what is in the area. Look for animals or plants that may be living there.
3. Use a craft stick to scoop out some of the soil from the ground and put it on a piece of white paper. Use the magnifying glass to look carefully for all the plant and animal life you can find.
4. Pick up any human-made items you find within the area and put them in another pile. Note which pile has more in it.
5. Carefully examine each pile. Separate the natural things into seeds, soils and animals. Separate the human-made pile into metals, glass, paper and plastic.
6. Pick one or two things and sketch them.

## VARIATION

If you are short on time, omit the turf exploration and modify the TALK IT OVER questions.

## TALK IT OVER

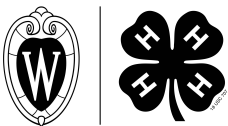
Try to get each youth to express his or her feelings and experiences.

### *Reflect:*

- What was the most interesting thing that you found in the sidewalk crack? In the turf?
- Did you find more human-made items in the sidewalk crack or in the turf? Why do you think that was?
- How is the sidewalk crack environment similar to the turf environment you explored? How is it dissimilar?

### *Apply:*

- How did exploring these tiny “worlds” change your understanding of how humans can effect plant and animal habitats?
- What did you learn about your community by paying attention to the “small stuff”?



UW-MADISON EXTENSION

Adapted from 4HCCS  
Exploring Your Environment  
project series Level 1, Eco-  
Wonders (BU-7704),  
pages 46-48.

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