

Doing Plot Studies with Students

Plot studies are a great way to learn meaningful math and science skills in the schoolyard. Details on this lesson can be found on the *program name* site (website address given).

You can make one-meter square forms with pvc pipe, or just use hula hoops! Scientists toss them to get a random plot to sample.

Keep your students safe! All students should wear sturdy shoes, long pants, and hats when working in the field. Let parents know in advance when you plan to work out doors. Parents can apply sunscreen and bug repellent at home. Use safety precautions such as safety glasses and gloves when needed.

Don't work outside in inclement weather. A little drizzle is OK, but rain can make the students uncomfortable and the ground slippery. Windy days can be even more dangerous with falling tree limbs or blowing debris.

With this unit I give each group a plot under a hemlock tree and one under a deciduous tree. For virtually everything they measure, they will find a big difference in the plots. You could have one plot under trees and one in a grassy spot, or one in a wet and one in a dry area.

It is easy for students to inventory the plants. They don't have to identify them, just describe them and count the ones that are similar.

The arthropods are **really** fun to inventory if you have some basic collecting and magnifying tools. This activity will inspire your future entomologists!

