

September - Week 1

Who Dined Here?

All year the plants have been working: sprouting from seeds; sending roots deep to anchor and to absorb water; sending leaves upward to catch sunlight; making flowers, then fruit. We have now entered the month of September and time in which plants and animals are trying to make every minute count. Plants continue to soak up sunlight and capture it to store up energy for the upcoming winter. Animals that feed on plants are searching out nutrient rich plant material, leaves and fruits, to maintain and build up their energy reserves.

This week go outside and examine plants, namely their leaves. Plant leaves are the primary location for capturing sunlight and turning that into energy. This energy not only powers the plant, but many animals, including insects and mammals, rely on the energy these leaves contain to fuel their bodies.

In early spring as fresh leaves unfurl, it is easy to find “perfect” leaves that have not yet been chewed on by insects or other animals. Can you find many perfect leaves now? Alternatively, can you find leaves that have been “mined” by insects? Evidence of “mining” typically looks like zigzagging lines, meaning an egg was inserted and a very small insect larva has grown inside the leaf and eaten nutrients, leaving a trail which is often a lighter color than the rest of the leaf. Do other leaves have perimeters chewed on (or more appropriately chewed off)? Or do leaves have holes chewed through them?



Examine leaves and draw or sketch leaves that exhibit evidence of herbivory. Try collecting data by using a color crayon to create a rubbing of a leaf. Does the rubbing show the holes or incomplete image of a leaf? If you find a “perfect” leaf, include a rubbing of that as well as a compare and contrast image. Finally, make a claim to answer the question: Who dined here?