

GATEWAY FROM HOME

Botany for Breakfast: Who Eats That Plant?

The gardens and parks in our yards and neighborhoods are nice to look at and sometimes provide us with food to eat. Each part of a plant also provides food for animal visitors. Head outside and use this scavenger hunt checklist to see if you can find each plant part and the critters that depend on them. Some animals like birds and mammals are shy, so remember to be patient and watch closely!



Flowers

The petals of flowers are used by the plant to attract **hummingbirds** and **insects** like bees and beetles. These pollinators eat pollen and nectar from the flowers and help the plant by transferring pollen to other plants.

Find:

- flowers
- insect
- hummingbird



Seeds & Fruits

Seeds and fruits (which contain seeds) grow new plants and are favorite snacks for **birds**!

Find:

- fruits
- seeds
- birds





Leaves

Plants use leaves to convert sunlight into sugars they use as food. Animals like these sugars too, which is why **mammals** like deer and **insects** like caterpillars and beetles eat leaves so much! Some insects also eat dead and fallen leaves, helping them to decompose into soil.

Find:

- leaves
- insects
- mammals



Stems

Stems (including tree trunks) help plants move water and nutrients. **Insects** like aphids eat the sap from stems, and **mammals** like squirrels eat fiber from trunks.

Find:

- green stem
- woody stem
- tree trunk
- insects
- mammals



Roots

The roots of a plant help it to take up water and to store and absorb nutrients. Small **mammals** and **insects** can eat roots. Some special **fungi** – too small for us to see - also form connections with root systems to share nutrients with the plant!

Find:

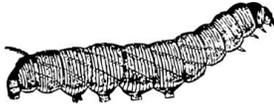
- roots
- mammals
- insects

Check out the next page for examples of these hungry critters.

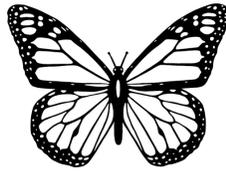
See a plant or its animal visitor that you don't recognize? Take a photo or draw a picture! Field guides and apps like iNaturalist can help you identify plants and animals.

Insects

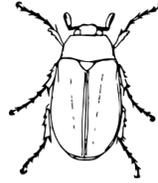
Caterpillars and butterflies, beetles, bees, wasps, aphids, and termites are all examples of insects that love to snack on different parts of plants.



caterpillar



butterfly



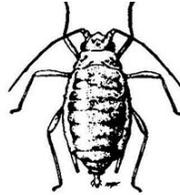
beetle



bee



wasp



aphid



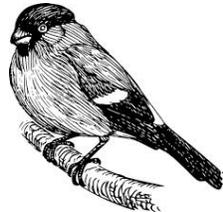
termite

Birds

Look for hummingbirds drinking nectar and other birds like quail, finches, sparrows, and woodpeckers eating seeds and fruits.



quail



finch



sparrow



woodpecker

Mammals

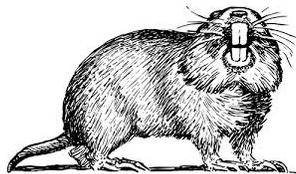
There are many kinds of small and large mammals that like to eat different parts of plants. Deer and rabbits eat mostly leaves, and gophers eat roots from tunnels underground. Squirrels eat seeds and tree bark, and bears are known for their taste for fruits like blackberries.



deer



rabbit



gopher



squirrel

