

ADAPTATION EXPLORATION

Student activity



Search for these pond dwellers, and observe their unique features that help them to thrive in this environment!



GUNNERA

This huge living fossil has existed since dinosaurs roamed the earth! Peek underneath the leaves and carefully feel its texture. What interesting feature protects the plant from becoming a snack?



BALD CYPRESS

Look closely for cypress "knees", which are projections growing up from the roots. Then, observe the watery environment these trees are growing in. Can you guess what these "knees" help the tree with?



RED-EARED SLIDER

A winter pond is a quiet place, as there is not much food and temperatures are cool. If these reptiles do not migrate, can you guess how turtles survive when their pond freezes over?



WATER LILY

Water lily pads and flowers need to stay above the surface of the water to survive. How do you think these plants float on the surface?



DRAGONFLIES

Dragonflies are aerial acrobats. These insects can fly up, down, backwards, and even hover like a helicopter! Study the shape of a dragonfly's body- what features allow the insect to zip through the air and catch their prey?



MALLARD DUCK

These ducks tip head-first into the water to sift out food. When they pop back up, water rolls right off their backs! What features do you think keep these ducks nice and dry?

Check out the next page for more adaptations

Can you find plants or animals with these adaptations?



MIGRATION

Why do you think some species spend so much energy migrating? Can you see a bird that may migrate to a warmer climate in the fall?



WAXY LEAVES

Plants with thick, waxy leaves can retain water on even the hottest day. Find an example in the Garden, and brainstorm what environments you think this adaptation would be useful in.



HAIRY LEAVES OR STEMS

Gently feel the leaves of a “hairy” plant. This isn’t just for looks! What could be the benefit of having fuzzy leaves and stems?



COLOURFUL FLOWERS

Flowers need to be pollinated in order to produce seeds. Keep this in mind as you closely observe a flowerbed in the Garden. Why might some flowers be so brightly colored, and richly scented?



DROOPING BRANCHES

Heavy snow can break the branches of trees growing in Northern habitats, but the snow slips right off the drooping branches of some conifers. Can you spot this shape?



CAMOUFLAGE

Search extra hard to spot a hidden creature in the leaf litter, trees, or pond. What does this adaptation help critters do?



FOOD STORAGE

Some birds and animals store food during the fall to make sure there is plenty to eat in the winter. Can you see any critters stashing away snacks for later?



THICK, FURROWED BARK

The bark of some tree species can be as thick as your arm is long! Find and feel a tree with furrowed bark, and try to guess why this adaptation can be so important.

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