USA National Phenology Network
Taking the Pulse of Our Planet

Training Materials

Selecting Individual Plants

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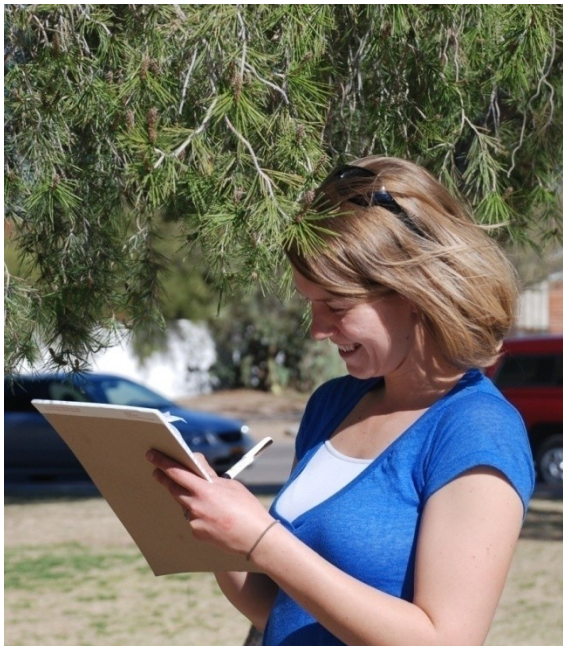
nature's notebook

1. Select a site
2. Select plant and animal species
3. **Select individual plants**
4. Mark your site and plants
5. Record your observations of animals
6. Record your observations of plants
7. Report your data online



www.usanpn.org/participate/guidelines

When selecting individual plant(s) to observe, consider these issues:

- Plant health
- Number of individuals to monitor
- Plant lifespan (annual or perennial)
- Site conditions

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Plant health

Choose plants that are

- healthy
- physically undamaged
- free of insects or disease

Healthy alder tree

Diseased alder tree

Number of plants of the same species to monitor

- 1 to 3 plants of the same species at a site

Number of plants of the same species to monitor

- 1 to 3 plants of the same species at a site
- Not direct neighbors, but in a similar environment

Three creosote bush plants selected for monitoring in an observer's back yard.

Notes on annual and biennial plants

- Avoid choosing the first or the last seedling to emerge
- Select a new plant to monitor each year (for annual plants) or every other year (for biennial plants)

Other considerations…

- Avoid plants that are close to a road or building
- For clonal plants, choose individual stems from different clumps

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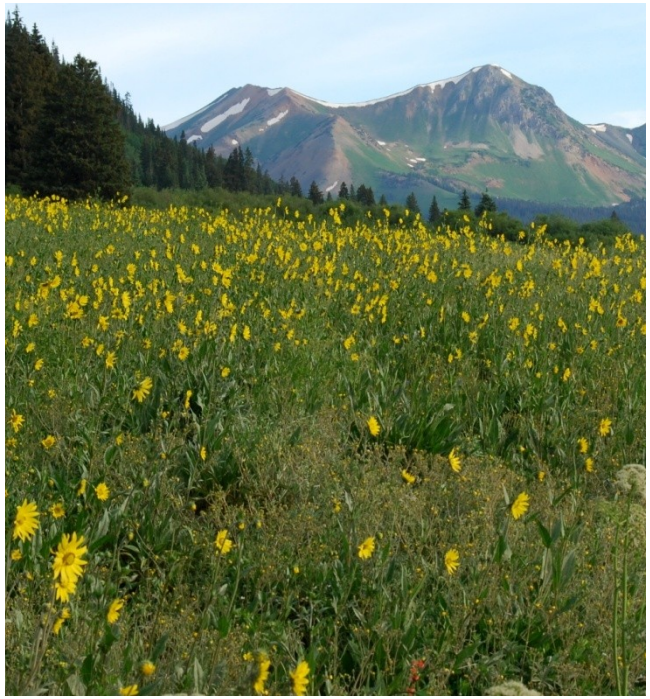

Clonal aster plants

What if the plant I am observing dies?

- Select a new individual to monitor
- Note the death in the comments section of the datasheet
- Give the replacement plant a new, unique label

Recently dead glacier lily

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