

# The Diversity in a Plant Community

Materials: Four plot markers, data collection sheet, pencil, measuring stick

Procedure: On a Scenic Trail \_\_\_\_\_ (trail name), walk for 3 minutes and stop. Each group should select an area to study.

Not disturbing any plants, AVOIDING poison ivy and looking CAREFULLY where you put your feet and hands, put one corner marker in the ground. Using that marker as one corner, measure a one meter square marking the corners with the other plot markers. If you include large trees, make them at the edge of your plot. Plants overhanging the plot may be included as being in the plot.

Look carefully to differentiate between different types of plants. Usually leaves will be the most commonly seen but unique characteristic that species shares. All plants of the same species will have leaves that are the same shape and about the same size. Sometimes the plant may have fruit or flowers that can help you determine if they are in the same species. Determine one species of plant and use the "A" markers to mark one of those plants. This will help to keep the plants from getting mixed up. Count the number of "A" species and mark it on your data sheet. Then select a "B" plant and count the number of "B"s and enter the data do this for all of the different types of plants in your plot.

If you know the name of the plants, that is great, write them on the data sheet.

Photo Option: If you do not know the names of the plant, take a picture of the whole plant and a close-up. Write the photo numbers next to the appropriate letter on the data collection sheet.