

Saratoga Independent School  
Square of Life Project  
Environmental Group

We first started this project in September. It was 67 degrees outside. The first thing we did was measure out our meter plot with meter sticks. It was fun spraying the ground with spray paint. There are 11 students in our class so we made up 3 different squares. We wondered if we would find similar things since our squares were all on our school property. We didn't really think we would see so many things in such a small area. We were so surprised about just how much life we found in our meter squares! Here are some of the things we observed: Lamb's Ear plant, mushrooms, small black cricket, ant hole and ants. We saw a shrew (see photo) just sort of half in and half out of his hole. He didn't try to hide when we stood around him. At first we thought maybe it was dead but we could see it breathing. Our teacher told us that this was unusual to see and we thought maybe he wasn't very healthy since he wasn't acting normal. We observed him but were careful not to get too close. Here is a picture of the shrew:



Another picture of the shrew as he finally got up and walked away.

We often see deer tracks and scat around our school property so we were not surprised to find these things in our squares. Our teacher even spray painted some scat blue as it was on the border of our square!



Blue Deer Scat!

We also found pine needles, tree bark, tiny rocks, and some different kinds of beetles.

Here are some pictures of us making observations and taking notes.



We read the project data from many schools. We were surprised to hear that many schools found a lot of litter in their square. It made us sad that people don't take care of the environment. We decided to compare our square with the Sullivans School in Yokosuka, Japan. We chose this school because it was so far away and we figured there would be many differences. We read their school report and created a giant Venn diagram to compare and contrast our squares. Here is our Venn:



You can see why we found that our squares were similar; we both had ants, leaves, rocks, beetles, weeds, flowers, sticks, and grass.

We found out that Japan is a very different place than where we live. We think the environment in Japan must be very different. The students in Japan saw things like bamboo, a turtle in a pond, and a pigeon in her nest with eggs.

We thought this project was a lot of fun because it was nice to go outside and learn more about our school property. We liked watching living things a lot. Some of us never saw a shrew before.

We learned that no matter where you live you see many of the same things. We were surprised on how many insects you can find in a small area. We learned that there can be so many things in one little square and if you take a moment to look very carefully you too might be surprised to learn how much life one little square can hold.