

## **Track 4: Ecosystems, Food Webs, and Human Food Geography**

### **Featured Lessons**

- Field Guide Introduction•
- Constructing Schoolyard Ecosystems and Food Webs•
  - The Ecosystem Game•
- Fruit Science and Cooking Experiments•
  - Fruit Geography•

### **Overview**

In this track, students learn about the living and non-living things that comprise their schoolyard ecosystem and how they compete and work together to maintain a viable environment for all. Students construct food webs and learn how everything, from rocks and sand and tiny animals, to trees, shrubs, and grasses, to predators like hawks and owls are key to the survival of everything else in an ecosystem, including humans. Students think about how they live in an ecosystem and are part of a complex food web that connects them to every corner of the globe. Through experimentation, hands-on games, and critical thinking exercises, students learn how humans have learned to harvest and then preserve and process the plant parts that make up the majority of their diet, disconnecting us from the plant origins of everyday items such as sugar and chocolate.

### **Encouraged Lessons from Other Tracks**

*Plant Parts are Tasty* from the Parts of a Tree track  
*Plant Predators* from the Soil, Worms, and Insects track  
*Plant Protection* from the Soil, Worms, and Insects track  
*Fruits, Deadheads, and Seeds* from the Plant Life Cycle track  
*Competition for Limited Resources* from the Plant Life Cycle track

### **Age Range for Lessons**

These lessons are most appropriate for students in grades 4 to 8, though younger students will enjoy experiments and the *Ecosystem Game*

