I Like Plants

L590

Even when I was very young, I always loved plants. When we walked to school, I would look

at the different plants. I would make up names for them. I would draw pictures of them. When my

teacher asked us to draw a picture of anything we liked, I always drew pictures of plants.

When I got to high school, I took a course that was all about plants. Most students took the

course in biology. But I took the course on plants. We went into the park and identify different

species. It was amazing to find that there were at least 27 different kinds of plants in our neighborhood

park. In fact, there were about 12 different kinds of trees. Some were deciduous. We were there in

spring, so they had their leaves.

I learned that weeds are not really bad plants. They are interlopers. They come from another

environment. Somehow they get to the new environment. It could be that animals bring them. The

animals might pick up the seeds on their fur and carry them to the new habitat. Then they fall off and

start to grow.

When I went to college, I knew that I wanted to study plants. I wanted to work in a career in

which I would be a plant scientist. I wanted to be a botanist. I took courses in math, English, and

history. They were good courses. But it was the science courses I loved.

Now I am teaching at a college. I am teaching about plant life. I explain how fertilizers can

help plants grow but also can destroy the balance of nature. I teach about helpful insects. One of the

most helpful insects for plants is the ladybug. Ladybugs are small insects that eat aphids. They can

protect plants by eating the aphids that would eat the plants' leaves. There are about 5,000 kinds of

ladybugs. In winter the ladybug hibernates. Then in spring it comes back out and starts to protect the

plants again. Several states have named the ladybug their state insect.

I teach about ecology, too. I explain that if you introduce a non-native herbivore into an

environment it can cause problems. For example, in Australia long ago people brought rabbits. The

rabbits ate so many plants that they caused a problem. This invasive species ate plants that other

animals depended on. The rabbits even killed trees. They ate the bark off the trees, and the trees died.

Some people think that Australia's desert has expanded significantly because of the introduction of the

rabbits. They say it is a very big problem.

I keep learning more about plants and the animals that depend on them. I like being a teacher

because I am always learning more. I learn from my research on the Internet now as well as going to

the park and studying the plants in my community.