

A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR BEAR HELPS THE FOREST

This teacher's guide is designed to assist you in creating talking points and ideas for classroom activities in conjunction with school visits.

THEMES IN THIS BOOK

- "Mysteries" of the Natural World

When I began writing this story I thought of it as a mystery plot. Where do the leaves go? "Did you eat them?" Bear asks her friend Deer. Did Mama clean them up? But what are the clues for solving this mystery? Does Bear actually solve the mystery? What are some other "mysteries" in nature? A mystery is something difficult or impossible to explain. Something that is puzzling?

- Cycles of the Seasons

The changing seasons are explored through the changes in leaves and how they occur. What are the seasonal changes in the story? How do things change with the seasons where you live? Are there other changes you can think of that are not mentioned in the story?

- Decomposition

This is the process of rotting or decay. What are some of the things that contribute to decomposition in the story?

- Ecology

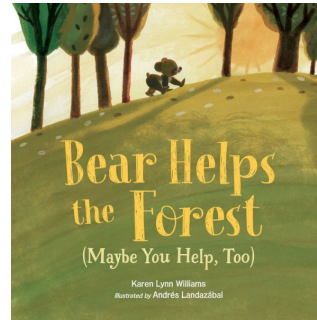
Ecology is the relation of organisms to one another and their environment. Environment—the surroundings in which we live. Describe how the organisms in this story work in their environment. What do you think the author means by "the forest does its work." How does bear help? What does the author mean when she says, "maybe you do too?"

- Composting

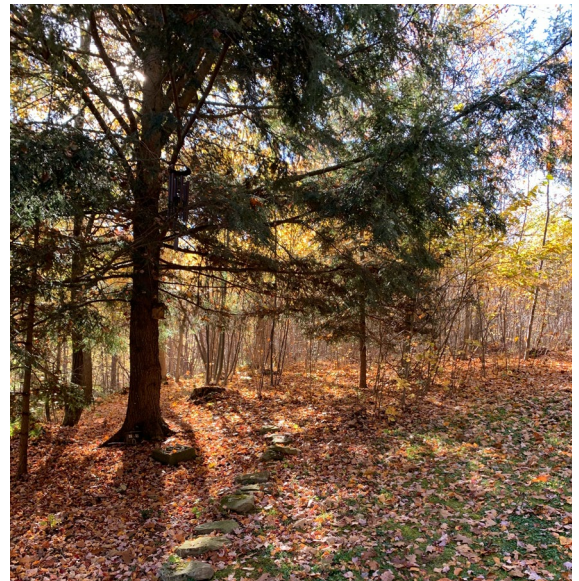
Composting is a process of converting plant materials into a nutrient-rich material. The end-product is compost—a dark, crumbly, earthy-smelling material. What are some things that help change the leaves into rich soil in this story? What does the sentence. How do you think a human walking in the forest might help with this change?

- Human – Nature Relationship

What are some ways that humans can help nature? How does nature help us?



BEAR HELPS THE FOREST
by Karen Lynn Williams



A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR BEAR HELPS THE FOREST continued

SUBJECT AREAS IDEAS

- Science

It is estimated that one large tree can provide a day's supply of oxygen for up to four people. Trees also store carbon dioxide in their fibers helping to clean the air and reduce the negative effects that this CO₂ could have had on our environment.

Scientists have been exploring the ways trees share water and nutrients with each other and even communicate with each other. It's believed they send distress signals about drought and disease, or insect attacks. Trees alter their behavior when they receive these messages. Scientists call these mycorrhizal networks.

How do leaves help a tree and other plants? Leaves are very important to plants. A leaf makes food for a plant. Leaves do this by using sunlight for energy to take apart water from the ground and carbon dioxide from the air. Leaves use parts of water and carbon dioxide to make sugar. This is called photosynthesis. Research this process. Chart how photosynthesis works.

- Art

Make a picture using dried pressed leaves. This book has great ideas. *Look What I did With a Leaf*. By Morteza E Sohi. Or Google 'Leaf art' for some great images of ideas for leaf art.

- Language arts

Find a favorite tree you like. Spend time near your tree. Get to know it. Give it a name. What kind of tree is it? How does the bark feel? Smell? What do the leaves look like? Follow it all four seasons. Write a poem about your tree. Share facts about your tree with the class.

- Health

It has been said that Nature rejuvenates the human body and spirit. Have students go outside to a park, playground or back yard and sit quietly as a group or assign this for them to do at home individually. Discuss how they felt, what they saw and smelled and heard.



POET'S TREE

By Shel Silverstein

Underneath the poet tree
Come and rest awhile with me,
And watch the way the word-web
weaves
Between the shady story leaves.
The branches of the poet tree
Reach from the mountains to the
sea.
So come and dream, or come
and climb
Just don't get hit by falling
rhymes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Karen Williams is available to speak and share her stories on this and many of her other books. Please visit www.karenlynnwilliams.com for more information on the books and other information about Karen.