

# Biodiversity in my neighbourhood

## Discovering plant life

Plants play a very important role in your local environment, and across Aotearoa, connecting many different organisms together.

Did you know you can find out a lot about plant life by using hula hoops as quadrats in your own back garden or local park? Quadrats are a bit like big photo frames, scientists use them to mark out a certain area of an environment that they want to look closely at. Quadrats used to only come in squares but now they can be rectangular or circular, just like your hula hoop.

Try using your hula hoop to make some new discoveries near where you live!

### What you will need:

- pen and paper
- magnifying glass
- hula hoop(s)
- plant identification book
- camera if you want to record your discoveries digitally

### What you do:

- 1 Head out to your back garden, local park, or other natural place with all of your equipment.
- 2 Make sure no one is around you then toss your hula hoop forward onto the ground.
- 3 Observe (look at) what you see inside your hula hoop; use your magnifying glass to see the plants in more detail. You can record your findings either by drawing, taking a picture or writing down the plant name or a description of what it looks like.
- 4 Throw the hoop as many times as you like all around the area you're exploring. The more results you get the more likely you are to find something different.
- 5 After observing your new discoveries, begin comparing and sharing with your friends.



Plants are made unique, just like you, so it's best to do some extra research about what you found in your quadrat. Try visiting [www.nature-watch.com](http://www.nature-watch.com) to discover what else lives around you!

## Did you know?

As scientists know the size of their quadrats and the size of the whole area they are investigating, they can do some clever maths to get an idea of how many of each of the different species of plants there are within a space, this saves them having to count every single plant! So if you found 10 grass plants in 1 hula hoop and the space you were exploring was as big as 20 hula hoops you could estimate there were 200 grass plants in the whole area.