Backyard Observation Square

This activity is adapted from the Urban Ecology Center. Video here.

Time: 15-30 minutes (can observe multiple times!)

Materials: four sticks, four pieces of string that are each two feet long, an outdoor space you can return to, a pencil/pen (colored pencils too if you want!), a notebook.

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1. **Choose a spot in your backyard (around 2ft x 2ft) or in an outdoor public space where it won't be disturbed. When you are choosing a spot, look for variety in what is on the ground--some sprouts/different types of plants, etc.**
2. **Tie your four strings together so that they form a square and lay it out on the ground over your backyard spot.**
3. **Place one stick at each corner of the square so that your string is stretched around them.**
4. **In your notebook or on a piece of paper, closely observe and draw what you see in your square. Include both living organisms and abiotic (nonliving) things. What do you notice? What do you wonder about?**
5. **Schedule a time to return to your square and make another observation--try observing your square once a week for the next month! This is especially fun in the spring, when a lot is changing.**