

ELF NOTES

Environmental Learning for the Future - Vermont Institute of Natural Science

www.vinsweb.org/education/elf/volunteers.html

ANIMAL REACTION

Find an observation spot outdoors - it can be right out the back door. Watch for any animal activity. Look for one animal, even as small as an ant. See what happens when another animal, alike or different, appears on the scene. How does each react to the presence of the other? Do they act friendly, indifferent, frightened, or hostile? Different animals react differently to the sight of their natural enemies. Most flee. Some make exaggerated displays to scare the other animal away. Usually, wild animals avoid fighting whenever possible. Even when pressed, they delay fighting as long as they can by "posturing," using aggressive body language to end a dispute nonviolently. As you watch two animals interact, do you notice any posturing? What can you tell from their body language?

ADAPTATIONS THORNS & THREATS

All plants and animals rely on certain defenses for survival. Animals and plants have particular adaptations that protect them from predation, "being eaten," and other threats to their survival.

Plants have a variety of defense mechanisms that can make them distasteful or inedible. Animals may have physical and/or behavioral adaptations that protect them. Some defense adaptations are common to both plants and animals - think about a porcupine's quills and a rose's thorns. Defense adaptations are a success if they allow the organisms to reach maturity and reproduce.

ELF NEWS FROM SCHOOL

