



Aryn - Testing the benefits of leaf life

What was your goal and what did you achieve?

I wanted to show people how leaf life helped with gardening and why people shouldn't just get rid of it. First I had to figure out which plants I was going to use, so I used jalapenos, because they didn't need pollination so it was bit easier because we didn't know if they would get pollinated or not, and they also grew in a shorter time frame, and I also really like them.

Then I had to collect some leaf life from my driveway, so after a few days we put it into the garden and chose three on one side that we would give leaf life, and three on the other side where we would keep the soil bare. And then after a few weeks we would study how each one grew. After a few weeks, the ones with bare soil, even though we'd been watering both sides equally, the soil was drier and the plants were wilting whereas the ones in the leaf life were growing as well as ever.

Who else helped with your project?

It was mostly my dad and me. I collected most of the leaf life and when it got to the gardening we did most of that together.

How have you promoted your project?

Our school has a Global Sustainability Council and I plan to share there what I found out. I'm a part of that now but it's only recently started up so I haven't been able to share anything yet.

Biggest success?

From the start of the project I was thinking there probably was a difference between leaf life and bare soil, I just wasn't sure how big a difference that would be, and it was really big.

We measured the temperature a few days before putting everything together and the bare soil was 55°C, which on a 33°C day that soil is 22°C warmer, while the one with cover was only 29°C which was less, so it is cooler in the soil if you have cover. I thought it was really incredible how big a difference there was between them.

Next steps?

I hope to continue growing these plants, I like chilli, and if someone comes over I can tell them about the process I used for growing them, but I don't think I'll be able to keep all of the plants.

Your advice to other students?

With your experiment, you need to be really good with your notetaking, taking down everything that is happening, because you really want to try and compare the difference if you are doing a comparison project like mine, because if you spend a little bit of time on it each day it won't seem as different as it actually is.

What did you enjoy most?

The gardening, my garden has only been used for a while so it was really fun to use it this year.

This case study was transcribed from an interview. These are Aryn's words and opinions.

