Darwin was fascinated by the types and amounts of weeds that grew in his garden. He cleared a small wild patch of ground, then observed and counted all the weeds that grew, noting how many survived over time.

You can do a quick and simple experiment to find out how many different types of plant exist in a patch of your school grounds by using a quadrat to isolate a small area. A quadrat is a frame to put on the ground, but why not use a hula hoop as your frame?

What do I do?

1) Place the hula hoop on an area on a wild patch of ground, such as a playing field.

2) Divide the hoop into quarters using 2 pieces of string.

3) Count the number of different plants growing in each quarter.

4) Using the key, try to identify as many of the weeds/ grasses/ wild flowers that you find.

5) Compare the results within each quarter of the hula hoop, why might they vary?

6) Compare your results with a group working on a different patch of ground. Why might the results be different in different areas?

What do I need?

- Ball of string and pair of scissors
- 1 hula hoop per group
- Notebook to record findings
- Classification Key/Identification guide