

Steps to Establishing A Field Site

When developing a field monitoring site you want to find one that can be used for phenological observations, exotic species investigations, and for potentially establishing a Picture Post. The ideal site would be located in an area of natural vegetation with native species that are not watered or fertilized. If the ideal site is not available, then any site, including grass lawn area, is fine, but try to pick an area which minimizes human disturbance. If you have a planted garden area that has species relevant to phenological monitoring then this is fine too. The important thing to remember is to adequately describe your site, to take photographs of your site, get GPS coordinates, and conduct a sketch map.

- 1) Assess the plant species available to monitor around your school.

Some example species might include:

- a) Trembling aspen
- b) Plains cottonwood
- c) Balsam cottonwood
- d) Common lilac
- e) Ponderosa pine
- f) Douglas fir
- g) Forsythia
- h) Common dandelion
- i) Canada thistle
- j) Colorado blue columbine
- k) American linden
- l) ***Other Species you have available***

(see [Project BudBurst](#) or the [National Phenology Network](#) websites for other species' sheets – many species are described)

- 2) Pick a site that is convenient for monitoring, be sure you have access/permission if not on school grounds
- 3) If you plan to monitor invasive species at your site:
 - a) Select species you wish to monitor and consider their current level of infestation
 - b) Look for a site that has variability in topography, sun/shade, and water
 - c) If you have an area that is currently invaded, this would be a good site for monitoring different treatments to compare the effectiveness and also to monitor spread or reduction of the invasion
 - d) Also, see:
<http://www.citsci.org/cwis438/websites/CitSci/SelectingASite.php>
- 4) Get GPS coordinates of your site.
- 5) Provide additional location information: City, local street location, location relative to the school, etc. (also add this information to your sketch map).
- 6) Do you plan to install a Picture Post? Can you get permission to install here?

- 7) Describe your site with as much detail as possible, provide a list of major plant species to the extent possible. (see Project BudBurst "Steps to Getting Started"). Be sure to note if the site is predominately native vegetation, managed landscaping, or a garden area. Also be sure to note whether the site is watered or fertilized.
- 8) Take pictures of your site, making sure to note directionality of each photo.
- 9) Draw a sketch map of your site.
- 10) Keep this information in a place where you and your students can refer back to over the years.