

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EWV INTERSTITIAL 113: SENOR TAPIR

Ynes Mexia and the Wax Palm

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FOLLOWS: EWV 123 "BACKYARD SOUP"

CONNECTION: Different plants grow in different environments.

CURRICULUM: Elinor see Ari, Olive, and Senor Tapir in the forest and runs to meet them, tripping over a strange tree root. Oooh – she's never seen that tree before! Senor Tapir praises her mettle, which reminds him of another undaunted nature adventurer, Ynes Mexia. In the song that he strikes up, the verses recount her quest to the Andes Mountains to find and bring back a rare, beautiful palm tree, while the chorus describes more broadly how she fell in love with collecting plants and found a new inner strength – and a new calling – in the great outdoors. At the end of the song, the kids decide to look for more "new" plants that they've never noticed before.

In 1934, botanist Ynes Mexia sets out on her own to collect a sample of a beautiful and hardy palm tree that only grows in the remote and cold high Andes Mountains. Over her career, she personally collected ~150,000 plant samples, among them ~500 new species and two new genera.

LS1: Understand that all living things have external parts

B. Record observations about a plant's physical appearance

C. Categorize a variety of plants based on their physical characteristics

LS2. Understand that animals have different body parts that are used in different ways to meet their needs, and that plants have different parts that help them survive and grow

D. Explore how different external features of an animal help it survive in its environment

FIRST DRAFT: 4/22/2019

Open on SENOR TAPIR, ARI, and OLIVE sitting on a log. ARI spots ELINOR as she runs over to them and waves at her.

2 Hi--oof! ELINOR 2

3 ELINOR (CONT'D) 3
I've never seen that tree before!
How INTERESTING!

Senor Tapir starts to strum his guitar and sings. We
TRANSITION to a simpler style of animation that describes
what he is singing.

Ynes Mexia (ee-NEZ Meh-HEE-uh) sits on her mule looking up at a steep mountain trail.

ZOOM IN ON: Mexia's notebook, with a sketch of the legendary Wax Palm growing in the mountains.

6 SENOR TAPIR (CONT'D) 6
The tallest of all palm trees, it
prefers the cold, thin air.
To understand its special traits,
she had to seek it there!

Mexia and her guides start up the trail, which zig-zags up the mountain. Mexia sings as they go:

7 SENOR TAPIR (CONT'D) 7
(chorus, singing as Mexia)
*"All plants have different features
That help them grow and thrive.
If we carefully compare them,
We can see how they survive."*

The group passes each type of plant as it is mentioned, and Mexia points out its key features: willowy branches that don't break in the wind and spongy trunks that hold water.

*"Some are thin and springy,
To bend in whipping winds.
Some are stout and spongy,
To keep their water in."*

CLOSE-UP ON Mexia, in her element.

*"The world of plants is boundless—
What's a botanist to do?
But blaze a trail to find them,
And classify them too!"*

Time passes and different weather conditions roll through: rain and thunder, gusting winds, intense sun. Mexia leads the group through it all, even when the trail disappears.

8 SENOR TAPIR (CONT'D) 8
Undaunted by the pouring rain, the
wind and blinding glare,
They had no path to guide them, so
they found their own way there.

Rounding a bend, Mexia spots the coveted palm tree! Mexia runs to the tree, circles it, and pulls out her notebook, feverishly sketching.

*"At last!" Ynes Mexia cried, when
first she saw the tree.
Two hundred feet in height, it
touched the clouds triumphantly.*

*All plants have different features
That help them grow and thrive.
If we carefully compare them,
We can see how they survive.*

She excitedly points out features of the tree.

*"Perhaps this waxy coating
(MORE)*

SENOR TAPIR (CONT'D)

Helps to keep the water out,
And high above, the birds
Help spread the tasty seeds about!"

MONTAGE of flipped-through notebook pages filled with Mexia's plant sketches and discoveries.

Her love of plants was boundless -
She discovered quite a few!
She blazed a trail to find them,
And classified them too!

TRANSITION TO:

3. EXT PARK -- DAY

Back in the park, SENOR TAPIR looks up from his guitar to see ELINOR busily sketching. She holds up her drawing of the strange tree she tripped over. The parts are labeled, as in Mexia's drawings.

9	ELINOR	9
	Look! I'm going to start a collection, and maybe we can figure out what kind of tree it is!	

10	OLIVE	10
	That sounds fun! Let's all look for new plants to collect!	

The children scatter. SENOR TAPIR follows them

11	SENOR TAPIR	11
	(chuckling)	
	Be careful! No running!	