

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EWB INTERSTITIAL 113: SENOR TAPIR

Ynes Mexia and the Wax Palm

Written by MEG ROSENBURG

FOLLOWS: "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

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

SECOND DRAFT: 5/16/2019

POLISH DRAFT: 5/30/2019

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 ELINOR 2
Hi--whoops!

3 ELINOR (CONT'D) 3
I've never seen this kind of tree
before! How INTERESTING! I wonder
what it is?

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

CLOSE UP: on Ynes Mexia (ee-NEZ Meh-HEE-uh) as she studies a plant and writes in her notebook.

ZOOM OUT: to see that the plant she's studying is growing in a wild and dangerous location. (Settings that might work: growing on the bank of a rushing river, or at the top of a waterfall, or on a very steep cliff face.)

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

The tallest of palm trees
It likes mountain air
To find where it grows
She had to climb way up there

Mexia and her guides start up the trail, which zig-zags up the mountain.

Ynes Mexia
Took every chance
To go and explore
And look for new plants!

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.

Hiking through storms
And wind and sun
She got a bit lost
But still had fun

Ynes Mexia and her group reach the Wax Palm. It's huge! They celebrate, and she sketches it in her notebook.

"At last" she said
when she first saw the tree
Two hundred feet high
As tall as she could see

CLOSE UP: on Mexia as an idea occurs to her. She bends down (out of frame) and pops back up holding a sprig of wax palm seeds (fruit).

She wanted to have
this tree back at home
so she took some seeds
to grow her own

ZOOM OUT: The group happily makes their way back down the mountain. [chorus]

Ynes Mexia
Never missed a chance
She went and explored
And found new plants!

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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.

6	ELINOR	6
	Look! I'm going to start a notebook	
	with pictures of all the new plants	
	I can find!	

The children scatter. SENOR TAPIR follows them

7	SENOR TAPIR	7
	(chuckling)	
	Be careful! No running!	