

TEACHER PRINTOUT

Part I: Food Chains and Food Webs Organization Cards

Prairie Clover

(Dalea purpurea)

Prairie clover can be found in Indiana, Montana, Tennessee, and New Mexico. It is most abundant in Midwestern prairies. The purple flowers can be seen from May through September.



Total Energy:
8000 KCal

Shamrock Orbweaver

(Araneus trifolium)

Even though these spiders have poor vision, they are experts at catching small insects for dinner!



Total Energy:
20 KCal

Massasauga Rattlesnake

(Sistrurus catenatus)

These rattlesnakes are small, but their venom can kill! The massasauga rattlesnake will eat during the day in the spring and fall, but in the heat of the summer, it hunts at night. This snake prefers small rodents, frogs, and lizards.



Total Energy:
23 KCal

Deer Mouse

(Peromyscus maniculatus)

The deer mouse can be found in most places around the United States. They are nocturnal animals and eat a variety of roots, fruit, and small arthropods if seeds are not available.

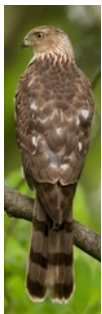


Total Energy:
60 KCal

Red-Tailed Hawk

(Buteo jamaicensis)

The red-tailed hawk is a carnivorous bird of prey. These birds prefer small mammals but will also eat snakes and small birds.



Total Energy:
1 KCal

Eastern Cottontail

(Sylvilagus floridanus)

Eastern cottontails spend most of the day resting, and tend to eat grasses and herbs when visibility is limited. Sweet grasses and clover are the cottontail's favorite diet.



Total Energy:
954 KCal

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Wild Rye

(*Elymus glaucus*)

Wild rye is a common prairie grass that produces a large amount of seeds. This grass can grow over one meter high and is a main source of food for herbivores in open plains.



Total Energy:
5000 KCal

Skunk

(*Mephitis mephitis*)

Skunks are omnivorous, meaning they eat both plants and animals. They will eat many things, including insects, bird eggs, and small rodents, as well as seeds, nuts, and berries. Skunks are omnivores, so they can actually be classified in more than one trophic level.



Total Energy:
91 KCal

Western Meadowlark

(*Sturnella neglecta*)

This relative of the blackbird is common on the prairies. Its bright yellow chest is one of its more distinctive characteristics. The meadowlark feeds on seeds and insects and will use the tall prairie grasses to build nests on the ground.



Total Energy:
75 KCal

Switchgrass

(*Panicum virgatum*)

This hardy grass is common on the prairie. It has deep roots and coarse leaves to help it survive drought and other unfavorable conditions.



Total Energy:
5000 KCal

Coyote

(*Canis latrans*)

Coyotes are superior hunters and usually work in pairs. Coyotes will eat many things but prefer small mammals. They have been observed targeting ground-nesting birds.



Total Energy:
1.5 KCal

Northern Mole Cricket

(*Neocurtilla hexadactyla*)

Mole crickets can be found throughout the United States. They are about 20 mm long and have powerful legs. Their back legs are useful for jumping, and their strong front legs help them burrow in the soil so they can eat underground stems and roots.



Total Energy:
518 KCal

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Milkweed Plant

(*Asclepias syriaca*)

Milkweed is an important food source for bees, butterflies, and other insects. It has velvety leaves and can grow 1 to 1.5 meters high.



Total Energy:
6500 KCal

Dogbane Beetle

(*Chrysochus auratus*)

If you find a patch of milkweed on the prairie, you may likely see a dogbane beetle. These insects are about 1 cm long and are iridescent; their color can change depending on the angle of the light! Colors blend and range from blue-green to copper. The beetles lay eggs in the milkweed and the pupae feed on the roots.



Total Energy:
465 KCal

Snakeweed Grasshopper

(*Hesperotettix viridis*)

The snakeweed grasshopper is an insect that eats grasses and other plants. The grasshopper will also eat grass seeds such as wheat and rye.



Total Energy:
533 KCal