

The Great Garden Scavenger Hunt

1 Maya and her classmates were excited for their spring science trip to the botanical gardens—and a scavenger hunt! Teams could earn points for each correct answer, with bonus points for quick submission of the official form. Winners would receive giant packets of wildflower seeds for pollinators.

2 After the bus stopped, Maya joined her group: Jaden, who loved bugs; Olivia, who was great at math; and Sam, who always had a joke ready. Mrs. Carter handed each team a worksheet, a list of clues, and a garden map. “I don’t have any extras,” she told them. “Be careful, work together, read very carefully, and have fun!”

3 Maya immediately spotted familiar faces on another team—Leo, Priya, Nia, and Ben. “Friendly rivals?” Leo grinned.

4 Maya nodded. “Friendly rivals.”

5 When the whistle blew to start the game, Maya’s group tackled their first clue: “Find a plant with leaves shaped like hearts.” The team scanned the garden map, looking for answers. Olivia pointed at some foliage and said, “Look! Those leaves by the pond are like hearts!”

6 The group rushed over, and Jaden checked the sign. “They’re called hostas,” he read. Sam scribbled “hostas” on their worksheet.

7 Leo’s team arrived at the pond. “Nice find,” Nia said. “If you can’t find butterflies later, try the gazebo. There’s a bush in there that the butterflies can’t get enough of.” A cool breeze rustled through the garden.

8 The next clue required some detective work: “Find a flower that opens only in the morning.” Maya thought of water lilies, but there were none at the pond. The group followed winding paths through five acres of flowers, studying their signs.

9 Sam found a vine with purple flowers and read the sign: “ ‘They open in the morning and close at dark.’ Morning glories!” The wind rose up and rustled the worksheet. Sam wrote the answer, drawing tiny rays around each “o.”

10 Jaden knelt by a nearby plant. “Whoa, look at this!” A black caterpillar with orange spikes and a white belt was dining on a dill leaf that wagged in the wind. “Black swallowtail caterpillar,” Jaden said. “You know they eat their own exoskeleton after they molt?”

11 Sam grinned. “What do you call a bug that’s bad at hiding?” He paused. “A spotted bug!” The group groaned.

12 “We need to hurry!” Olivia said, reading over Sam’s shoulder. “ ‘Find a tree that loses its leaves in the spring.’ ”

13 On the map, Maya spotted a cluster of small trees nearby. After a short jog, the group combed the signs for answers. A young oak stood out because its leaves dropped in spring, not fall—a process known as marcescence. Sam wrote “Pin oak” on the worksheet, gripping the paper against the gusts.

14 Another clue asked for a plant that smells sweet. Olivia led the group to a patch of lavender. They leaned in, inhaled deeply from downwind, and smiled.

15 Sam read: ‘Find a plant that is essential to monarch butterflies.’ Snapping his fingers, he said, “Gazebo!”

16 Jaden wanted him to wait, but Sam was off. The group chased him to a bush covered in purplish flowers. A sign read: “Butterfly Bush—Popular Nectar Source for Butterflies, Bees, and Moths.”

17 Pleased with himself, Sam started to write down “Butterfly,” but Jaden stopped him. “Wait. It helps butterflies in general, but it doesn’t help caterpillars. And monarchs need something else as *essential*—like milkweeds.”

18 Maya pointed at the sign. “And this says ‘butterflies’ . . . not monarchs specifically.” She struggled to read the map in the wind. “There’s a meadow right next to the pond. Milkweeds should be there.”

19 Having lost precious minutes at the gazebo, they raced to the other side of the garden. Out of breath, they found “Swamp Milkweeds—Host Plants for Monarch Butterflies.” Jaden pumped his fist.

20 Sam quietly wrote “Swamp milkweeds” as the group’s answer. Only two clues remained!

21 Just as they rounded a bend, Leo called out, waving his arms. “Maya! Can you help us? Our map blew away, and we can’t find where to go for our last clue!”

22 Maya looked at her group, then at Leo, Priya, Nia, and Ben—all looking frantic and helpless.

23 “Should we—?” she began. Maya, Jaden, Olivia, and Sam traded glances, their options flapping in the fierce wind.

Read “The Great Garden Scavenger Hunt.”

Consider what Maya, Jaden, Olivia, and Sam are thinking after Leo's group asks for help. In your own words, write a multi-paragraph story about what happens next.

Use what you have learned from the passage to help you write your story.

Remember to —

- provide a beginning, a middle, and an end to your story
- put events in the order in which they happen
- include descriptions of people, objects, and settings
- use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar

Use the space provided to write your story.