

Active Reading

Section 2: Crops and Soil

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

In North America, insects eat about 13 percent of all crops. Crops in tropical climates suffer even greater insect damage because the insects grow and reproduce faster in these climates. In Kenya, for example, insects destroy more than 25 percent of the nation's crops. Worldwide, pests destroy about 33 percent of the world's potential food harvest.

Insects are one of several types of organisms considered pests. A pest is any organism that exists where you do not want it or that exists in large enough numbers to cause economic damage. Humans try to control populations of many types of pests, including plants, fungi, and microorganisms.

Wild plants often have more protection from pests than do crop plants. Wild plants grow throughout a landscape, so pests have a harder time finding and feeding on a specific plant. Crop plants, however, are usually grown together in large fields, which provide pests with a one-stop source of food. Wild plants are also protected from pests by a variety of pest predators that live on or near the plants. Some wild plants have also evolved defenses to many pests, such as poisonous chemicals that repel pests.

IDENTIFYING MAIN IDEAS

One reading skill is the ability to identify the main idea of a passage. The main idea is the main focus or key idea. Frequently, a main idea is accompanied by supporting information that offers detailed facts about main ideas.

Read each question and write the answer in the space provided.

1. What is a *pest*?

2. List three types of pest populations that humans try to control.

Write the letter of the phrase in the space provided, that best answers the question

- _____ 3. How much of the potential food harvest do pests destroy worldwide?
- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| a. 100 percent | c. 33 percent |
| b. 50 percent | d. 10 percent |

Active Reading *continued*

RECOGNIZING SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

One reading skill is the ability to recognize similarities and differences between two phrases, ideas, or things. This is sometimes known as comparing and contrasting.

Read each question and write the answer in the space provided.

4. How does insect damage to crops in Kenya compare to insect damage to crops in North America?

5. Why do crop plants have less protection from pests than do wild plants?

The following statements apply to either wild plants or to crop plants. In the space provided, write “WP” if the statement applies to wild plants or “CP” if the statement applies to crop plants.

- _____ 6. grow throughout a landscape
_____ 7. provide pests with a one-stop source of food
_____ 8. have evolved defenses against many pests
_____ 9. are protected from pests by pest predators that live on or near the plants
_____ 10. grow together in large fields

RECOGNIZING CAUSE AND EFFECT

One reading skill is the ability to recognize cause and effect.

Read each question and write the answer in the space provided.

11. Why do crops in tropical climates suffer greater damage than crops in North America?

12. Why do humans try to control pest populations?
