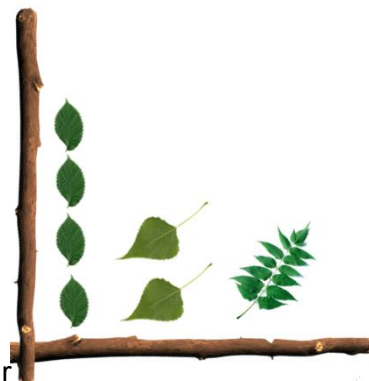# BEMP Backyard Monitoring

Each month, BEMP community scientists collect essential data about the health of the bosque and how it changes over time. Data collection can easily be done anywhere-- even in your own yard! When BEMP collects the data, they are looking at leaves, flowers, and fruit that fall off of plants (litterfall), the depth of the water that is in the ground (groundwater), and how much water falls from the sky (precipitation). **To start creating your own 'BEMP site' and see how your backyard or neighborhood changes over time, check out the instructions below!**

Monitor a litterfall tub: Monitoring a litterfall tub is a great way to see what kinds of plants are around you and how they change through time. What might you find falling from a plant in the spring? What about in the fall?

1. Find a large and flat item that can be used as your tub, like an old pot or bowl (make sure your family is okay with you using it!). It needs to be able to keep fallen leaves and other plant parts in it.
2. Find a place to put your tub! Try to put it somewhere where other people won't move, bother, or step on it.
3. Leave your litterfall tub out for at least a week and then check what plant parts fell during that time. Empty the tub completely and then check the next week so you can track the changes over time.
4. Start to analyze your data! A great way to do this is by making a graph using your leaves, like the one shown. Is there more than one kind of leaf or plant part? Which one do you have the most of? If you don't know what the plants are called, you can describe them, ask your family, or use **iNaturalist** to figure it out.

What can you do with your leftover litterfall?

Design a piece of outdoor art using your litterfall and add some sticks, mud, stones, water, pine needles, or any other materials you can find. Create a picture in your yard or on a sidewalk using these natural objects. If your parent or guardian allows, take a photo of your art piece and share it with us! (Facebook: @Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program, Instagram: @bempinitup).