

CHAPTER 06**Habitat****Orchard: A wonderful habitat****What is an orchard?**

Orchards are areas of trees and shrubs planted for food, usually fruit. They are an historic habitat; Not only are orchards useful and beautiful, they can also be important for wildlife. They are perfect for pollinators and fruit trees age quickly which creates essential deadwood habitats.



Farmers grow mango, guava, sapota, banana, citrus (battai) trees in the villages. In orchards, farmers grow a single type of fruit plants; in a mango orchard there will only be mango trees. But we find several other small plants growing on the ground and also find different types of animals there.

Orchards have been used to grow food for thousands of years. Because orchards are mosaics of trees, grasses, shrubs and wild flowers, they support a wide range of wildlife. As fruit trees age quickly, they create the perfect habitats for invertebrates and birds, such as the lesser spotted woodpecker and the rare noble chafer beetle.

The combination of fruit trees, the grassland floor, fallen and standing deadwood, hedgerow boundaries and scrub, and associated features such as ponds and streams, mean that traditional orchards offer a mosaic of different habitats, which support plant diversity and a range of wildlife species.

The fruit trees in Traditional Orchards are generally planted further apart and can grow to a good size with a more open, spreading form, unlike the short-lived or dwarf varieties found in commercial orchards.

The spacing of the trees and range of tree ages in a well-established orchard, provide varied light conditions, shelter and food.

Fruit trees age more quickly and provide deadwood habitats. Crevices and hollows may provide nesting sites for birds.

Fruit tree blossom is an important source of nectar for pollinating insects including bees, hoverflies and butterflies.

Orchards often have ponds and hedgerows, which provide habitat for amphibians such as great crested newts, birds and mammals, such as hedgehogs and voles.

Orchard trees are more widely spaced than trees in a dense woodland, they let in more sunlight. This is particularly good for flying insects who need the warmth, such as bees and butterflies.

All in all, orchards are special places, not just for us to enjoy, but for a range of other creatures too.

Diversity of habitats in Telugu States:

The plants that grow in coastal regions differ from those of Telangana or Rayalseema. We can see mangroves only in

coastal districts. Grapes are grown in Telangana. Similarly, we can see same type of plants in all places of our state.

Cactus, Acacia, Aloe vera (Kalabanda) plants do not need water like chilly or jasmine plants. They are called desert plants. We can see camels frequently in the desert. Desert plants and animals are suited to dry conditions and vast temperature differences. Different characteristics in the desert make up desert habitats.

Compare water plants with land plants:

Collect an aquatic plant say a hydrilla or vallesneria. Also collect any land plant. Now compare the two.



TULSI PLANT VALLISNERIA PLANT

Parts	Terrestrial plant (Tulsi)	Aquatic plant (Vallisneria)
Stem	Supporting strong stem	Long, hollow and light stem
Root	Long and developed to absorb water and nutrients from surroundings.	Short, thin and fibrous roots to allow the plant to float
Leaf	Have thick waxy cuticle and stomata are present on lower side of leaf	No thick waxy cuticle and stomata are present on upper side of leaf
Others	Terrestrial plants are rigid and erect.	Aquatic plants are less rigid.

Our house as a habitat:

We live at our house. It provides us with shelter and protects us from the harsh environment. Here we can grow, eat food, etc. Thus, the house is a habitat.

A habitat is a dwelling place for plants and animals that gives them optimum conditions for life. We live in houses that protect us from heat, cold and rain, etc. and are a shelter for us. We keep some animals and birds as pets in our houses. We also grow some plants which give us fruits and vegetables.

Several animals like dogs, cats, goats, cows, birds (like hens, ducks, pigeons), spiders, ants, and cockroaches live with us. Plants like the money plant and some crotons are also kept inside our houses. Thus, we can call our house a habitat.

We fail to accept even little changes in our house or surroundings. We feel disturbed. Do we feel the same way for others? We are dumping wastes in nearby ponds, lakes, rivers and grounds and destroying forests on a large scale to set up industries. Think what will happen to all the organisms living in these areas.