Teacher's Guide for ASK: *Nature's Poisoners*,

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Betty Lou Askin, a retired educator, who resides in Toronto Ontario, prepared this guide.

Scoops (pages 2-3)

Knock, Knock

- Report how scientists are trying to make a computer more human.

Seashore Southpaws

- Why are some things more difficult for left-handed people?
- Explain why scientists are studying the fiddler crab.

World Wide Web

- Recount why the scientists are puzzled about the huge spider web in a Texas State park.

Nestor's Dock (pages 4-5)

- Make a list of the affects of a bite from the poisonous spider.
- Why did Mrs. Phil give Nestor money?

Attack of the Killer Snails (pages 6-13)

- Use a Read Aloud method to share the contents of this section.
- During or after reading use these prompts to focus on the content:
    1. This article uses the words "zipping around" to describe the cone snail. Why do these words seem so strange for a snail?
    2. Describe how the cone snail gets its food.
    3. Olivera discovered why the cone snail venom is so deadly. Explain his findings.
    4. Tell about the lab student's experiment on the cone snail's venom.
    5. Why might some poisons be good for humans?
    6. Explain why Jon-Paul Bingham's work is important.
- This article has many sidebars providing information about other poisonous creatures. Use the Think, Pair, Share method and ask the students to read these sidebars. The students should first read the information with their partner and make notes. They should then be prepared to tell the rest of the class about these creatures. This activity could extend into pair/group research projects.

Plants that Poison (pages 14-19)

Questions/activities to use with this article-

- Before reading this article, ask the students how they think that plants might protect themselves.
- Page 14 suggests ways that plants can protect themselves. On the chalkboard make a list of these methods.
- How does one type of tobacco plant protect itself?
- Pages 15 and 16 tell about various plant poisons. Discuss these ways with the students.
- Describe how plants and insects have "co-evolved".

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- **Why is one type of fruit fly the only insect that loves the vomit plant?**
- **Describe 2 ways that some lemurs can eat poisonous bamboo.**

The Butterflies' Strange Behavior (pages 20-22)

Activities to help with the understanding of this information-
- **Discuss the picture shown on pages 20 and 21.**
- **Before reading the information on page 22 ask the students to predict why the butterflies follow the army ants.**
- **Making connections-**
  Write a paragraph explaining how and why creatures of a tropical forest depend on one another.
  Or, write a paragraph explaining how and why all creatures depend on one another.

Is There a Genius in Your Bathroom...or Your Kitchen? (pages 24-27)

One suggestion for use with this material is to choose a co-operative learning strategy, such as a Jigsaw or a Literacy Circle.
- **Divide the class into 8 groups. Assign one of the 8 inventions to each group. Each group would be responsible to read the article, make notes and make a presentation to the rest of the class.**
- **The class might be asked to research other bathroom and kitchen inventions.**
- **They could be asked to invent a gismo for one of these rooms in their house.**

Jimmy and the Bug (page 32)

- **Describe why leaves change colors in the fall.**

Research
- **You may wish to have the students do some research on other creatures and plants that are poisonous, especially any that may dwell in your area of the country.**

Creative Work
- **The students could make posters warning people about certain poisonous creatures or plants.**

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