

This project is called Tiny Ecology, an exercise of sustained attentiveness in place.

Shared by Jeffrey J. Cohen, Arizona State University

## **TINY ECOLOGY**

During the first week of class you will choose a place near your home for intense and sustained ecological attentiveness. During the course of the seminar you will make frequent visits to note changes within this space from late August into December. There are no special requirements for the ecosystem you choose: a built environment, a natural space, a humanly curated expanse (park, garden), an abandoned corner or lot, a creek or a fountain. Best is an area close to where you live or work that you have passed by or near for some time without paying much regard to what unfolds within its little biome. The area can be as small as a concrete planter by a Metro station or as large as a tree and its environs. Attention should be paid to human influence and neglect, nonhuman forces (weather, sunlight, microclimates, pollution, decay, gentrification), and the surfacings of particular histories (especially but limited to the species of animals and plants evident; you may have to learn the difference between kudzu and dandelion, starling and wren). Take ample notes that include questions your observations elicit and make sketches if possible. You will also be expected to create various narratives from these observations: poems, vignettes, short essays and journalism. Your notes and narratives will be used for ten weekly oral presentations, and then as the basis of your culminating presentation on Tiny Ecology Day.