

# KOALA ODOR



**Grades:** 2-5

**NGSS:** 2-LS2-2 Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics

**Subjects:** Biomes

Classification

Ecology

Permeability

Adaptations

**Materials:** Aluminum foil

Paper towels

Eucalyptus oil

## Background

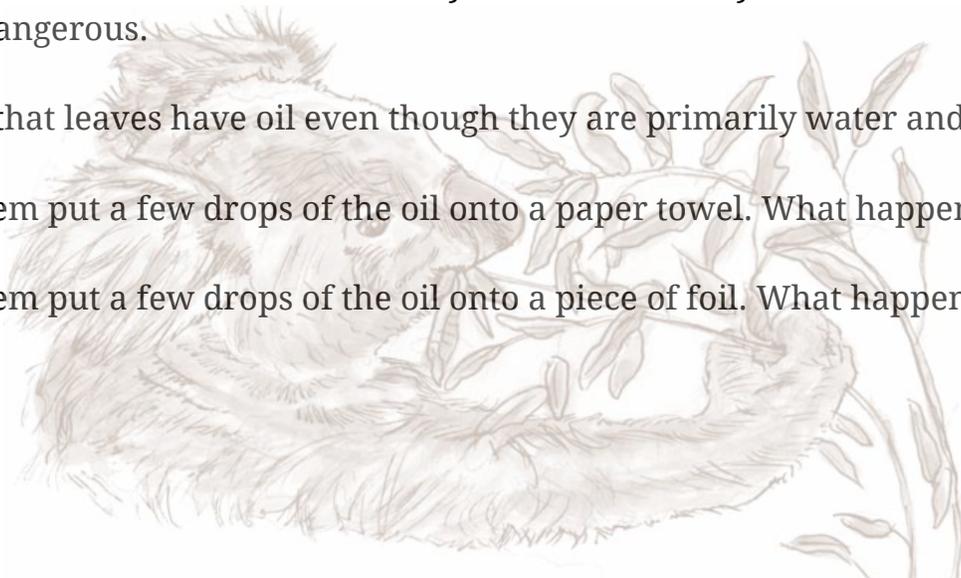
Koalas are slow and lazy during the day. In fact, they sleep in trees most of the day; however, at night, they eat eucalyptus leaves. These leaves are also used by humans to make cough drops because they contain menthol. Koalas eat so many eucalyptus leaves that they smell like eucalyptus or cough drops.

How does this happen? Do you think it helps or hurts the koala to smell like menthol?

Let's find out...

## Activity

1. Have the students smell the eucalyptus oil from the bottle; show them how to waft the odor towards their nose so they don't accidentally inhale a scent that could be dangerous.
2. Discuss that leaves have oil even though they are primarily water and fiber.
3. Have them put a few drops of the oil onto a paper towel. What happens?
4. Have them put a few drops of the oil onto a piece of foil. What happens?



# KOALA ODOR



## Discussion

Discuss permeability (having pores or openings that permit liquids or gases to pass through).

Discuss mucous membranes (a membrane lining all body passages that communicate with the exterior, such as the respiratory, genitourinary, and alimentary tracts, and having cells and associated glands that secrete mucus). The oil passes through the koala's mucus membrane and is excreted through the skin, thus they smell like the eucalyptus they eat.

Students will guess that the smell is bad for the koalas because it will point them out to predators. This is logical, but koalas don't have any natural predators. In fact, the menthol smell helps the koala as it drives away fleas.



This activity is excerpted from the Teacher's Guide to:

### ***If My Mom Were a Platypus***

Paperback: 978-1938492-11-2

eBook: 978-1938492-12-9

### ***Si Mi Mamá Fuera un Ornitorrinco***

Paperback: 978-1938492-06-8

Hardback: 978-1938492-03-7

eBook: 978-1938492-10-5

Download the complete Teacher's Guide and more free education resources at [ScienceNaturally.com](http://ScienceNaturally.com).



Sparking curiosity  
through reading

Feedback Welcome.

Please send to [Info@ScienceNaturally.com](mailto:Info@ScienceNaturally.com)