Hayes Witherow & Gabriel Wright

From the Ashes: Questioning the Fertility and Sterility

The purpose of our experiment was to see if burnt soil could support life and act as a fertilizer to plants. We wanted to know if after a wild fire occurs, like the Waldo Canyon Fire, the burnt soil would be able to grow new plants. Our hypothesis was that the plants growing in the burnt soil would grow the tallest. For our procedure, we grew Butter Gold Corn in 3 different soils: fertilized, unfertilized, and burnt soil from the Waldo Canyon Fire. We fertilized 10 plants with Age Old Kelp fertilizer and left the unfertilized and burnt plants alone. After 35 days, we measured the heights of the two tallest plants from each section and their averages. For the burnt soil, the 1st tallest stalk was 21 centimeters, the 2nd tallest stalk was 17.5 centimeters, and the average height was 19.5 centimeters. For the fertilized soil, the 1st tallest stalk was 24 centimeters, the 2nd tallest stalk was 19 centimeters, and the average was 21.75 centimeters. For the unfertilized soil, the 1st tallest stalk was 19 centimeters, the 2nd tallest stalk was 18 centimeters, and the average was 18.5 centimeters. Our hypothesis was disproved by the results because the fertilized soil had a taller average height than the burnt soil. Even though the burnt soil did not have the tallest corn stalk average, we can conclude that the burnt soil was able to support life.