



Teacher Resource Sheets

Activity Time:

Variable

Setting:

Classroom or outdoors

Method:

Students participate in activities at various stations to explore native plants.

Materials:

Vary according to stations and may include: set of plant cards (see Activity Black Lines), illustrations of native plants, pictures of wildlife, paint chips, magnifying glasses, live plant material, cardstock, glue, laminating material.

Grade Level:

K - Grade 3

Subject Areas:

Science, Art

Skills:

Classification, identification, matching, comparing

Group Size:

class, small group or individual

Vocabulary:

native, non-native, invasive, ecosystem, evolve, species



WildBC

Plant Stations

Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Recognize some native plants and their key features.
2. Explore and compare differences in native plants.
3. Recognize connections of wildlife and people to native plants.

Background

A native species is one that naturally occurs in an area. A native plant, for example, is a plant that has lived and evolved in a certain place for a long time (i.e. thousands of years) and is part of the natural ecosystem. Native species have co-evolved with other competing species, predators, diseases, climate factors and other aspects of a region and an ecosystem. Native plants are part of a natural balance and a natural system and provide important food and shelter for wildlife.

Non-native or alien species are those that do not naturally occur in an area and were likely brought to a place by humans, either accidentally or intentionally. A non-native species has not evolved as part of the native ecosystem and does not have the same balance and place in the ecosystem. Some non-native species are called invasive because they are able to spread and dominate or push out native species.

It is important to make sure the plants you are including in this

activity are native plants. Plants that grow wild can often fool people, they may not be native to that region – they may even be invasive. Check a field guide for your region such as listed in the resource section.

“By ‘playing’ with the material the children make discoveries that provide a base for scientific conceptual development on which they will build for the rest of their lives.” – Margaret McIntyre, Early Childhood and Science

Material Preparation

Vary according to stations, may include: pictures and supplied illustrations of native plants (and some non-native plants), pictures of wildlife, cardstock, glue, mactac or laminating materials, colour cards such as paint samples from a paint store, magnifying glasses, leaves of native plants, possibly live samples and other plant materials (see section 2 of procedure).

The Activity

1. Set up plant stations around the room using some of the suggestions provided. You may want to create a handout or booklet for the students to take with them to the different stations, or just have them rotate through the stations as they are. Check a field guide to make sure the plants you are using for this activity are native to your area. (Note: many of these “plant stations” can also be simple activities kept in bags for individual or group play at appropriate times.)



Plant Stations

Station 1: Native Plant Study

Objectives: To compare and observe native plants.

Method: Plant matching activity.

Procedure: Provide live samples of plants and match illustrated plant cards to the live samples. Magnifying glasses can also be used to encourage observations. *See Important Notes: Live Samples and Collection.

Station 2: What is Native?

Objectives: To identify and reinforce the concept of native and non-native plants.

Method: Sort plant cards into native and non-native species.

Procedure: Provide plant cards of easily identified plants that students should be able to sort into native and non-native species. Choose obvious examples of non-native species for younger children (examples: palm trees, exotic flowering plants, cactus). This is a simple version of the **What is Native?** activity and can be a reinforcement if you have already done a this activity.

Alternative Version:

Provide 2 pictures – one of a natural area such as in the region that you live and the other with a very manicured garden of exotic plants. Ask students to choose where different plant species (on cards) might belong.

Station 3: A Rainbow of Plants

Objectives: Compare and observe different colours in native plants.

Method: Match colour cards to pictures or live samples of native plants.

Procedure: Provide pictures or live samples of plants and colour cards (i.e. from a paint store) and ask students to match the cards to colours they find on the plants.

Station 4: Shape Hunt

Objectives: Recognize different shapes of flowers and leaves of native plants.

Method: Matching shapes to create native plants.

Procedure: Provide pictures or illustrations of native plants and cards with shape outlines. Match the shapes to the flowers. Examples of shapes and plants: circle – wild rose, heart – bleeding heart, star – salmonberry, egg-shaped – salal leaf, bell-shaped – salal flower. Addition: crayon rubbings for shapes can be made from different shaped leaves.

Station 5: All Shapes and Sizes

Objectives: Observe and match different leaf shapes.

Method: Matching leaves or leaf shapes.

Procedure:

Option 1: provide laminated leaf cards with 2 of each type of leaf for matching.

Option 2: provide outline shapes of leaves and match real leaves to the outline shapes.

Option 3 for older children: Use the native species cards supplied (see Activity Black Lines) or make a set of cards with pairs of matching laminated pressed leaves (and flowers) and the name at the bottom.

Station 6: Wildlife Connection

Objectives: Recognize and identify ways that wildlife use native plants.

Method: Match pictures of wildlife with native plants they might use.

Procedure: Provide pictures of plants with specific features that students would be able to connect with wildlife. Provide cards of wildlife (pictures or illustrations with names for older students or toy creatures if available) and ask students to match the creatures to a plant they might use. (Suggestions: bees to flower, beaver to small tree, squirrel to acorn/oak tree, bird to a bush with berries.) Include a picture of a person to promote the idea that we are part of the natural system as well.





Station 7: Plant Creations

Objectives: Explore native plants through art and use of senses.

Method: Create an art project using plant materials.

Procedure: Provide native plant materials with paper, glue and other appropriate art supplies and allow the creative juices to flow! (Suggestions for materials: fallen dried leaves and needles, fallen or dried flowers, cones or pieces of cones.) *See Important Note: Live Samples and Collecting

***Important Notes: Live Samples and Collecting**

It is very important to model the stewardship of native plants and natural areas that we want to convey to students. The following are some guidelines for the collection of native plant materials:

- Bring live samples of native plants from a nursery or garden. Please do not remove native plants from natural areas.
- Collecting native plant materials such as leaves, flowers and other parts of plants in a sensitive manner. Collect materials in small amounts (or from different areas), materials that have already fallen or collect no

more than 5% of fruit, seeds or cuttings from a plant to ensure sufficient parent materials for natural propagation, food and habitat for wildlife.

- It is illegal to collect from any national, provincial, regional or local park (without a permit).
- Do not collect intensively from the same area.
- Avoid disturbance to the area you collect from including avoiding trampling of other plants and spread of invasive species.
- For more information, see the Garry Oak Ecosystem Recovery Team's Guidelines for the Collection and Use of Native Plants on their website at www.goert.ca.

Extensions

Create a bulletin board highlighting the native plants you have focused on and display some of the native plant creations.

Older students: choose a native plant and create a poster or a small report.

