




Plant Signage

LEARNING ACTIVITY #1: Research Indigenous Plant Names

 Overview	<p>Students will collect the names of plants in the outdoor space and research their Indigenous names.</p> <p>It is important to consider that most common names for Indigenous plants have been named by western botanists. As opposed to naming places or plants after the person who “discovered” them, First Nations place and plant names are based on the teachings and personalities within. Since we are working with plants that are Indigenous to your territory, you may want to reach out to the local Nations and see if they would like to provide the native names for the plants. Should you go this route, please consider offering an honorarium for their time.</p>
 Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper and pencils • Chromebooks • Shared slideshow or worksheets to collect research information • Indigenous plant books (e.g. Food Plants of Coastal First Peoples by Nancy J. Turner), websites, or other resources
 Time	2 x 45 minute classes

Class 1

- 1. Opening:** Acknowledge the territory you are on, share some important plants of the area, and some of their key uses. The Indigenous plant section has further information about this or there are some on the [Royal BC Museum page](#).
- 2. List the Plants:** In small groups, have students log all of the plants that will be given signs in the outdoor space, whether that is in a school garden, school forest, nearby natural area or city park. Ensure appropriate permissions are in place where the signs will be installed, especially if they are installed off school property.

Class 2

- 3. Research Indigenous names :** In small groups, students will research the traditional name (with the correct spelling and perhaps pronunciation hints), traditional use, western name of each plant, and images of each plant. Contact your Indigenous Education Department to assist in this process.
- 4. Create a master list** of all of the plants, perhaps in a shared presentation. Print out individual sheets with Indigenous name, pronunciation, Western name, and a photo of the plant.

SEASONALITY:    

This lesson can be done at any time of year, though completing these in the fall or winter to be ready for the spring would be ideal, as you can incorporate your planning into the process.

CONTEXT:

In many ways signs brings the garden to life, and greatly increases participation and comfort for those engaging with the garden. People who normally feel out of place in the garden suddenly have ways to connect with the plants by becoming familiar with their name and potentially other information that is mentioned in the signage. Additionally, creating signs in the garden is a wonderful way to engage students and help them build a positive relationship with the garden space and the school in general. This can support them to become stewards and caretakers for this place.

CREDITS

This lesson was inspired by the **Harvest4Knowledge project** and was developed by **Marcus Lobb**. Marcus works for **Farm to School BC/PHABC**. He is a sixth generation settler of European ancestry and has been involved with the **Harvest4Knowledge Project** as the **Capital Region Community Animator** since 2019.

He resides on the traditional homeland of the **Lekwungen people**, now known as the **Songhees and Esquimalt Nations of South Vancouver Island**.

LEARNING ACTIVITY #1: Research Indigenous Plant Names






This lesson was originally taught on the traditional and unceded land of the Songhees and Esquimalt (Lkwungen) Nations, and the language and story shared here are from these people. By highlighting the language and stories of different Nations, we celebrate the long history and current relationships with the Indigenous people in what is now known as BC. Connect with your school's Indigenous Education Coordinator for more information if necessary.

Lkwungen Language: To incorporate language into the lesson, the [Songhees Nation](#) has more information on their website about their həlitxw' təə lək'əni?nən - Bringing lək'əni?nən Back to Life program.

Lkwungen Story: [Place to Smoke Herring Video](#)

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LEARNING ACTIVITY #2: Painting

 Overview	Students will paint the garden signs.
 Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous plant list: Can be offered as a shared presentation, or cards for each, along with a document camera to project the image Each individual sheet should include an Indigenous name, pronunciation, Western name, and photo/drawing of the plant. <p>Preparation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1" X 6" wood planks (8 foot lengths = 8 signs) 1" X 2" wood stakes (8 foot length = 4 posts) Outdoor white paint Wood stain: Linseed Oil, Tung Oil, Hemp Oil <p>In Class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colorful acrylic paints Paint brushes or rollers and containers An alternative to painting the wooden signs, paper could also be used and laminated, then stapled to the wooden posts.
 Time	30 minute class, teacher preparation time before and after the class

SEASONALITY: ❄️💧☀️🍂

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Before the Class (Teacher):

- Pre-cut the sign portion in 12 inch pieces (allows for 8 signs per 8 foot length of wood) and paint them with an outdoor white paint. Allow to dry for 24 hours. You should cut and paint enough for the needs of your garden, and consider the number of students in your class - pairing students may be required.
- Paint the full 8ft length of the posts white. (The students will then cut these posts into individual 2ft length posts in the next step of the lesson). The purpose of painting the signs is durability but it also creates a bright background for the plant names to be painted on - making them more visible.
- Before class, set out all of the painting supplies that will be needed.

During Class:

- 1. Introduce the Indigenous plant list:** As a class, review each card and practice the pronunciation together, repeating after you. Review the cards with a document camera or a presentation so students can see the words and plant photos.
- 2. Engage: Paint Signs**
 - Clearly explain what should be included on each plant sign. Write it on the board.
 - Hand out the plant names to each student (or pair of students depending on the number of signs being made).

- Wooden signs:** Carefully write the Indigenous name (and western name if desired) for the plants on the sign. Using colorful paints, have the students paint their signs and allow them to dry for 24 hours. You may also want to paint an image of the plant if space allows.
- Paper signs:** If laminating any signs, students can handwrite or type and print the information to include on the sign.

After the Class (Teacher):

- Paint a clear acrylic varnish on the signs to protect them from the rain. Use a garden friendly stain, as listed above in the materials list, and allow 24 hours to dry.

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Lekwungen Story: [Place to Smoke Herring Video](#)

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LEARNING ACTIVITY #3: Signage Construction

 Overview	In this lesson, students will assemble the signs from Learning Activity 2. Recommended age for this part of the lesson is Grade 5 and up.
 Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screws (1.5 inch decking) • Drills with square bit and Screwdrivers with square bit • Hand saw • Measuring tape • Rubber mallet • Several adult helpers
 Time	45 minutes

1. Introduction: Review the plant names.

2. Review activities at each station (see below for descriptions).

3. Construct Posts and Sign Drilling:

a. Station 1: Cut Posts

- With two or more adult supervisors, explain the process of safe cutting and drilling to the students by demonstrating how to cut and how to drill. Emphasize how we never look up when we are cutting, and we always are in a safe spot for cutting.
- Line students up and have them each cut their post. Posts should be at least 2 feet in length, but based on the length of the piece you purchase from the store you can improvise a little to get the most out of each length, and avoid leftover pieces. An 8 foot piece of 1X2 will give you 5 posts, at about 19 inches. When cutting the posts, the teacher will need to apply pressure to the end they are not cutting to avoid movement of the post. Clamps or simply sitting on the posts can do the trick.

b. Station 2: Drilling Sign onto post


- Once the students have cut their posts they can move on to learning about drilling. Showing them both how to screw in with a screwdriver and an electric drill is a fun activity.
- Attach two screws through the post first, spaced about 3 inches from each other. Always allow an inch of post to be above the top of the sign, so you can hammer the post into the ground and not knock the sign off!

4. Set up the signs in the garden:

- With a mallet or hammer, pound the stakes into the garden.
- Reflect on the learning by sitting in a circle outside: encourage each student to share what they have learned through this process and their favorite Indigenous plant name.

SEASONALITY:    

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 **NOTE: Stations and Adult Supervision** Using tools with students can be one of the most exciting parts of having a garden, however care must be taken to ensure the safety of all involved. Multiple adults are required to offer this activity in a safe way. Typically setting up stations for cutting and drilling with an adult at each is mandatory. The more adults and tools you have results in more stations, and students moving through the activity quicker. In general it will take 2-3 minutes per student per construction station. Someone will need to apply pressure to the post while the students cut, involve the one who just cut to support the next up, and for them to give the safety tips - peer to peer.

LEARNING ACTIVITY #3: Signage Construction

Curricular Connections

The K-12 curricular connections listed below are not exhaustive, but reflect the main subject areas that align with this lesson. Extension activities could also be included in Math (counting, measuring), ADST (food studies), Art (visual representations like drawings), and Science (plant growth, experiments).

ADST	Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies 6-9: Woodwork
Arts	Visual arts: Elements of design: line, shape, space, texture, colour, form (visual arts); principles of design: pattern, repetition, balance, contrast, emphasis, rhythm (visual arts), variety (K-8)
ELA	Kindergarten: Explore oral storytelling processes Grade 3: Develop awareness of how story in First Peoples cultures connects people to land Grade 9: Recognize the influence of place in First Peoples and other Canadian texts
PHE	Healthy and active living (K-12)
Science	Questioning and predicting: Demonstrate curiosity about the natural world; Observe objects and events in familiar contexts (K-9) Processing and analyzing data and information: Experience and interpret the local environment; Identify First Peoples perspectives and knowledge as sources of information (K-9)



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