



Plant Detectives: Scavenger Hunt



~Caregiver Instructions Page~

Objective - This activity is designed to set the stage for learning about plant identification by encouraging students to pay close attention to plant characteristics such as leaf edge, leaf color, and bark texture.

Audience and Time – 1 or more participants; all ages; 15-20 minutes

Background – When students first look at plants, they may think that they all look the same. By participating in an activity that has them looking closely at different species, students will start to notice how various plants and trees truly are different.

Supplies You Need to Collect Ahead of Time

- Clipboard or hard surface (like piece of cardboard) for each student, or work collectively
- Writing utensil for each clipboard (like a pen or pencil)
- Scavenger Hunt print out (next page)
- Optional:** Magnifying glass for looking at plants closely

Activity

- Step 1. Have a quick discussion with the student(s), asking them how they might tell the difference between various plants and trees in the forest.
Ask them guiding questions during this discussion, such as:
Are all leaves the same shape?
What are some different flower colors?
What do maple leaves look like?
- Step 2. Explain that they will be looking at differences between plant species by going on a scavenger hunt.


If there is more than one student, let them know that it is not a race and set ground rules such as spatial boundaries (example: only the backyard), time limits, and emphasize the importance of staying close and working together.

With younger children, it is helpful to have a Caregiver supervise and assist with finding plants and facilitating participation of everyone.

With older student(s), Caregivers can provide instructions, and student(s) can complete the scavenger hunt independently.
- Step 3. Hand out supplies.
- Step 4. Help student(s) as needed by pointing out interesting characteristics of different plants and keeping pace for them as they work through the activity.
If there is more than one student, make sure that everyone has a turn looking for the different items on the list.
- Step 5. After the scavenger hunt/time limit is done, come together to discuss what the student(s) learned. Ask student(s) about the shapes and colors of leaves that they saw and where the biggest tree was.

Plant Detectives


Smooth Bark
 Rough Bark

Thorns


Biggest Tree


5 Different Shaped Leaves

Something Growing in Sun
 Something Growing in Shade

4 Different Flowers
 

Smells Good
 Smells Bad

A Seed


A Soft Leaf
 A Smooth Leaf
 A Rough Leaf

Chewed Leaf


Big Leaves
 Little Leaves


Jagged Edge
 Smooth Edge



5 Kinds of Green