



Productive Plants (Grades K – 8)

During this tour students will discover the various ways plants are used from dyes to clothing, medicine and food.

Pre-visit Activity – How are Plants Important? (Grades K – 5)

Objective

Explore the important roles that plants play in our everyday lives.

Materials

- Weslandia by Paul Fleischman
- Various plant products brought in from home (i.e. cereal, fruit, vegetables, flowers, coffee, cotton, paper, tea, etc.)
- Cloth or bandana

Activity

- Read through Weslandia. During the story, ask the students to remember all the different ways Wesley uses his plant. After the story, discuss the various ways Wesley uses the plant and ask the students if they might also use plants in the same way (i.e. Wesley makes an instrument out of his plant. Do we make instruments out of plants?). During your discussion create a master list of all the different ways we use plants.
- Ask each student to bring something in from home that comes from a plant or that they think comes from plants (paper, tea, food item, lotion, basket, t-shirt). Bring in extra objects for those students who forget.
- The next day ask each student to share their item with the class. How did it come from a plant? If any new items are brought in that were not included on the initial master list, add them to the list during their presentations.
- Play a memory game: Have the class hide their eyes or turn away. Secretly take 6 – 10 of the different items brought in from home and hide them under a piece of cloth or bandana. Ask the students to uncover their eyes. Expose the items hiding under the cloth for 30 seconds and ask them to remember each of the items. Cover the items back up with the cloth and ask them to recall what they saw under the cloth. Play again with the remaining items.
- Explain that during their visit to the Atlanta Botanical Garden, they will see some of the different ways humans and animals use plants. Ask them to remember what they just learned about the ways plants are used and to take note anything new that they learned about plants during their visit.

Pre-visit Activity: How are Plants Important (Grades 6-8)

Objective

Explore the important roles that plants play in our everyday lives.

Materials

None

Activity

- Ask the students to make a list of 10 things they know come from plants. This can be done individually or in groups. Review their lists as a class and make any additions they might have missed.
- Revisit the list in more detail and try to determine specifically what type or part of a plant those objects originate from. For example, you may have listed clothing on board. What types of plants provide clothing (cotton, bamboo, etc.)? What do those plants look like and where do they grow? What part of the plant do we use for clothing? This can be done through a group discussion or as a homework/research assignment where each student is given an object from the list to learn more about and then share the learned information with the class.
- Explain that during their visit to the Atlanta Botanical Garden, they will see many different kinds of plants used for medicine (aloe, rosy periwinkle, African cherry tree), beverages (coffee, tea, cocoa), rubber, food (produce, vanilla, cinnamon, banana), furniture (rattan, raffia, bamboo) and others. During their tour ask them to think about what they already learned and what they are learning for the first time during their tour.

Pre-visit Activity: Discovering Local Food

Objective

Students will learn about the various types of produce available seasonally in Georgia.

Materials

- Images of produce in season (picture of apples during September) or copies of Georgia in Season handout located on the last page.

Activity

- Learn what is currently in season in Georgia by evaluating the Georgia in Season handout. If you are working with young children, obtain pictures of the seasonal produce or if you are working with older children, print out copies of the Georgia in Season handout.
- With your students, discuss the different types of produce currently available in Georgia. If they are unfamiliar with a particular type of produce describe it to them or ask them to learn more about the product and then share that information with the class. They might see some of the seasonal produce on the Georgia in Season handout growing in the Edible Garden at the Atlanta Botanical Garden.
- Ask the students to choose their favorite kind of produce on the Georgia in Season handout. When is it available in Georgia?
- Discuss with your students the advantages of buying local produce.
- Optional Extension: Ask the students to each find one delicious recipe they would want to try using produce currently in season in Georgia. Give them extra points if the recipe uses more than one seasonal item.
- Optional Extension: Bring in samples of seasonal produce for the students to try. Conduct a taste test with the class and have them each try the seasonal fruit or vegetable and rate it on a scale of 1 – 5. The produce with the highest average is the class favorite.

Post-Visit Activity: Using Plants

Objective

Students will create products using plants.

Materials

Various materials depending on project

Activity

- Discuss the various ways plants are used and reflect on what they learned during their visit to the Atlanta Botanical Garden. What did they learn that was new? What plant did they find the most interesting and why?
- Explore some of the uses of plants by doing these hands on projects:
 - **Paint with Blueberries:** Mash blueberries (either frozen or fresh) with a small amount of water. Distribute blueberry mixture, paint brushes and white paper to the students. Have the students paint a picture using the blueberry mixture. What other types of plants could they paint with (beets, red cabbage, spinach, etc.)?
 - **Plant Instrument:** Staple two decorated paper plates together and fill the insides with dried beans to make a maraca or close off the ends to a paper towel tube with tape or paper strips and fill the inside with dried beans to make a shaker.
 - **Raffia Bracelets:** Purchase plain or colored raffia strips and have the students braid them together to make a bracelet.
 - **Grow bean or alfalfa sprouts.** This only takes about a week and is relatively easy. Look online for different techniques and choose the one that best fits your classroom. Harvest the sprouts and sample as a class. If you grow various kinds, ask the students to compare and contrast the sprouts' appearance and flavor.
 - **Plant Poem:** Reflect on how plants make them feel and have them write a poem about it.

Suggested Children's Books

The Global Garden by Kate Petty and Jennie Maizels

Lily's Garden by Deborah Kogan Ray

Pumpkin Circle: The Story of a Garden by George Levenson and Shmuel Thaler

Who Grew My Soup? by Tom Darbyshire and C.F. Payne

The Story of Chocolate (DK Readers) by Caryn Jenner

How Monkeys Make Chocolate: Unlocking the Mysteries of the Rainforest by Adrian Forsyth

