

Woodland activity idea

Simple ideas to inspire groups to engage with woods in a safe and fun way

10) Plant Identification

Description of the activity / overview	These activities were presented in quick succession as a way of demonstrating three ways to introduce plant ID with groups. Each activity could be done as a whole activity for a session or extend over time.
Permissions needed	Access to the site – NRW WAY: Activity Permission
Timescale	Timings can vary according to group and time available. They are mainly starters, so could be kept to 10 or 15 minutes before doing more structure ID sessions.
Equipment	Coloured leaves collected from the woodland Resources from woodland that participants find Sit mats/bandanas Material for bundle 6 items from surrounding woodland Resources found in woodland Suggested Books: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Robb, M. Mew, V. and Richardson A.(2015) Learning with Nature, Green Books, Cambridge (p35)• Holland, C (2009) I Love my World, Wholeland Press, Otterton• Johnson, O. (2006) Collins Tree Guide, Harper Collins, Berkshire• Rose, F (2006) The Wild Flower Key, Penguin Books, London• Sterry, P (2007) Llyfr Natur, Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, Conwy• Nature Detective Tree/Flower/Mushroom swatches• Field Studies Council ID sheets
Who's enjoyed it in the past?	MIND Aberystwyth, Cysyllt Contact, Rangers, Forest School Leaders, teachers, health walk leaders.

<p>Leader skills and knowledge needed to do the activity (minimum and desired)</p>	<p>No need for full knowledge of plants as you can learn together, but there are Life Long Learning courses at Aberystwyth University, the Centre for Alternative Technology and Denmark Farm on Identifying Flowering Plants, Mosses and Lichens, Grasses Sedges and Rushes.</p>
<p>Methodology</p>	<p>Activity 1 Circle of coloured leaves in 3 tiers: middle, inner and outer. People find something that represents who they are and to place it in the circle which represents them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle – something they already do • Inner – something they would like to do • Outer – something they have never thought of doing <p>Acknowledge the different levels of experience and interest.</p>
<p>Methodology</p>	<p>Activity 2 Move to an area where there is a bundle laying waiting [there are 6 items found from the site in the bundle]. State the boundaries of the game and that items in the bundle have been collected from within those boundaries.</p> <p>Split into small foraging groups. Set the challenge: to find a sample of each of the items in the bundle. Open the bundle and leave for 15 seconds or less, then cover. Participants have 15 seconds or 2 minutes to bring back what they have found. Extension: lay them in the matching order. [Adapt this according to the time you have and the experience of your group]</p> <p>Explain invisible learning: raises interest in plants, develops 'search image' in their minds, initiates skills for plant identification in the future.</p>

Methodology	<p>Activity 3 [count how many in the group, divide into groups of 12 or less] Everyone to collect a stick that is the length of their arm and a stick that is a length of their forearm. Return to their group, form a circle touching elbows. Each member of the group places the tip of their longest stick in the centre of their circle and lays this flat like the spokes of a wheel. They then place the shortest stick parallel to their body joining their longest stick with the person to their left's longest stick. This should form a pie shape.</p> <p>Everyone in the group takes five steps away from the circle and brings back something they find lying on the ground. Place this in the outer sections of the circle. Then everyone takes ten steps away from the circle and brings back something they find at breast height (or lower depending on woodland cover). Place this in the middle section of the circle. Everyone takes 20 steps away from the circle and brings back a leaf from the tree they see above them. Place this in the centre of the circle.</p> <p>Discuss shape, edges, colour and size of items brought. Match those that look the same, encourage naming of similar features. Use books to identify the different species.</p>
Key Elements	Plant ID skills, woodland mapping, from the known to the unknown
Online Links	http://www.field-studies-council.org/publications/identification-charts.aspx http://www.britishlichens.co.uk http://www.botanicalkeys.co.uk/flora
Special TIPS!	Use your senses, be clear about boundaries so people don't wander too far.
With thanks to Kirsten Manley and the Actif Woods Aberystwyth groups	



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