



ReNews

For K-12 Educators
A Publication of the City of St. Louis
Refuse Division - Recycling Program
May 2008



Explore Native Plants With Your Students



When was the last time that your students simply hung out in their yards, strolled through their neighborhoods, or played in a nearby park? Studies have revealed that students who spend time in nature learn an

appreciation for it and better understand their responsibility in preserving the natural environment in which we all live. Spending time outdoors, investigating plants and animals, can also have a calming, nurturing effect on even the wildest child.

Native plants can be beneficial in that they can thrive without the lawn and garden chemicals (e.g., insecticides, herbicides) that are so much more dangerous to young bodies. Plants that are native to Missouri can also grow well with our climate, which seems to swing from heavy rain to drought. And these plants are highly compatible with the animals that are native to our area.

Consider conducting a native plant survey around your school or neighborhood. Compare them with non-native plants, which are sometimes referred to as "exotic," "invasive," or "alien" species.

Materials Needed:

- * Pencils
- * Paper, for drawing and note-taking
- * Rulers
- * Digital cameras (optional)

Encourage your students or teams to discover five to ten plants. Guide them in drawing pictures, writing notes, or taking photographs to record observations about each plant:

- * What colors are the flowers, leaves, fruits, nuts, etc.?
- * How tall is it?

- * How long are the petals or leaves?
- * What shape are the petals or leaves?
- * Are there any animals around or on the plant (e.g., birds, flying insects, caterpillars, worms)?

Assist your students with reviewing their observations to identify their plants. *Reference books that are useful for identifying plants that are native to Missouri include:*

- * Denison, Edgar. *Missouri Wildflowers.*
- * Kurz, Don. *Shrubs and Woody Vines of Missouri.*
- * Tylka, Dave. *Native Landscaping for Wildlife and People: How to Use Native Midwestern Plants to Beautify Your Property and Benefit Wildlife.*

Some Missouri native plant organizations and their websites include:

- * Grow Native! Missouri Department of Conservation - Website: <http://www.grownative.org>
- * Missouri Native Plant Society - Website: http://www.missouri.edu/~umo_herb/monps/index.html
- * Missouri Prairie Foundation - Website: <http://www.moprairie.org>

Encourage your students to share their findings with each other (or with you, if you studied your own plants). Guide them in comparing and contrasting their drawings, notes, and photographs:

- * What native species were identified?
- * What non-native species were discovered?
- * How are the plants drawn or photographed by each child similar or different?

Talk a walk, breathe for a moment, and check out some plants with your students. They'll thank you!



Native Plants

Additional Lesson Plans

(Note: These can be conducted indoors.)

* “Designing a Native Plants Garden”

Grades K-2

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/lessons/08/gk2/tggarden.html>

* “Wildlife ‘Real Estate’ Ads”

Grades 1-6

<http://www.crayola.com/lesson-plans/detail/wildlife-'real-estate'-ads-lesson-plan>

* “Native Plants - Living in Communities”

Grades 6-8

<http://www.wildlifehc.org/managementtools/backyard-growingnative.cfm>

* “Non Native Species: English Ivy - Landscape Plant or Deadly Killer?”

Grades 9-12

http://www.pbs.org/americanfieldguide/teachers/non_native/non_native_unit.html

Native Plants

See, Feel, and Smell Them In Action!

* Missouri Botanical Garden

<http://www.mobot.org>

In an area near their Kemper Center, you can explore native plant settings, such as a prairie and a glade, with plant markers identifying the species.

* Butterfly House

<http://www.butterflyhouse.org/visit/virtualtour.aspx#native>

Their Native Habitat Butterfly Garden offers a demonstration of native plants, specifically those that attract butterflies.

* Shaw Nature Reserve

<http://www.shawnature.org>

In their Whitmire Wildflower Garden, you can view a model of native landscaping that incorporates ground covers, flowers, bushes, vines, and trees. This is also the scene of their monthly Native Plant School classes, which consist of lectures and tours.



Callirhoe digitata
Common Name:
Fringed Poppy Mallow

Professional Development Workshop for Educators *Sustainable Schoolyards*

Turn a portion of the schoolyard into an outdoor classroom by engaging your students in planning, developing, and managing a sustainable native plant habitat. Participating teacher teams will be equipped with a curriculum and follow-up consultation to begin implementation in the coming school year. Two graduate credits are available.

For Teachers Of: Grades K-12

Date: June 16-20 / *Time:* 9am-4pm

Location: Litzsinger Road Ecology Center

Fee: None, by application only (Registration deadline is two weeks prior to the workshop).

For more information, visit www.litzsinger.org or call 314.442.6717.

Reader Submissions Welcome

The Recycling Program invites you to submit material for this monthly newsletter. Would you like to share your lesson plans, activities, “how to” tips, or something else related to waste management education? E-mail us at recycle@stlouis.missouri.org. We look forward to hearing from you!

To Subscribe

Would you or anyone you know (e.g., educator, homeschooler, youth group leader) like to receive ReNews? Contact us at recycle@stlouis.missouri.org or 353.7176 to be added to our e-mailing list for this free publication.

Distribution and Archives

We currently distribute ReNews in electronic format, to conserve natural resources and minimize costs. Previous issues of ReNews are archived at <http://stlouis.missouri.org/citygov/recycle/Education.htm>.

**City of St. Louis
Refuse Division's Recycling Program**
web site: <http://stlouis.missouri.org/citygov/recycle>
e-mail: recycle@stlouis.missouri.org
phone: 353.8877