

Wet Wander Coloring

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Adapted from: "Species Lists." *H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest - Oregon State University*, 6 Apr. 2017, andrewsforest.oregonstate.edu/about/species.
Franklin, Jerry F., and C.T. Dyrness. *Natural Vegetation of Oregon and Washington*. U.S. Forest Service, 1973.

Time: 60 minutes

Overview

This activity introduces middle schoolers (6th-8th grade) to plant identification, and the principles of plant behavior and diversity through the use of drawing and water coloring.

Rationale

Through this lesson, students will be able to **understand and appreciate** their local environment, by inspiring them to take action through conservation, advocacy, and further education. It will allow space for creativity, which builds upon students' abilities to draw connections between what they learn and how they can use that information to take action. Students will build skills in observation, drawing and art techniques, and descriptive language.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, middle school students visiting HJ Andrews will be able to:

1. Identify at least 4 species of local plant ecology (see *background material section on the next page for a full list*).
2. Demonstrate the ability to transfer attention to detail onto paper in a drawing.
3. List 3 key facts about a plant species of their choice.

Links to Standards

This facilitation will engage in science standards by also actively participating in awareness to action. By engaging in close up observation, they will tune into empathy towards nonhuman living creatures which will then spark the drive to interact with their natural, local environment with a priority of environmental consciousness and sustainability.

Materials Needed

- 2" x 6" watercolor papers (1 for each student)
- 5" x 7" watercolor papers (1 for each student)
- pencils
- watercolor colored pencils
- optional black ink pens
- watercolor sets
- water holding paint brushes
- reusable towels/ washcloths
- clipboards for each student
- 4 bandanas

Background Material

For more details on species at HJA, the best resource is the species list on their website. For more details on vegetation in the Cascade region, see the report by Jerry F. Franklin and C.T. Dyrness.

Species list: <https://andrewsforest.oregonstate.edu/about/species>

Report by Franklin and Dyrness:

<http://www.fsl.orst.edu/rna/Documents/publications/Natural%20vegetation%20of%20Oregon%20and%20Washington%201988.pdf>

Climate Change: a change in global or regional climate patterns, in particular a change apparent from the mid to late 20th century onwards and attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels.

Snag tree: standing dead trees that provide habitats for several species of animals. They provide more life than a living tree as they are home to decomposers and will eventually turn into soil.

Here is a list of plant genres and species that the students may find during this activity.

- Bigleaf Maple
- Red Alder
- Red Huckleberry
- Incense Cedar
- Himalayan Blackberry
- Douglas Fir, Oregon Pine
- Pacific Rhododendron
- Sword Fern
- Red, Western Red, or Pacific Red Cedar
- Stairstep moss
- Vine maple
- Pacific Yew
- Salal
- Western hemlock
- Lungwort lichen
- Licorice Fern

Activity Description

Students will have time to sit with local plants (or if they're lucky, they may find a slow moving critter they won't have to touch) and really digest the details, similar to sit-spots. After sitting with what they chose, they will be asked to physically draw what they see, rather than what they think they see, onto the bookmarks provided. They have two in case of mistakes. Then, an instruction on how to utilize the watercolor paint brushes will be provided. Students will then have the opportunity to watercolor what they drew to make a colorful bookmark for their journals.

Step 1. Getting Started: Introductions (1-5 minutes)

1. Overview the next hour: let the students know they will get to learn about the local plants, have some quiet time to themselves for a sit spot (Ask: "do you know what a sit spot is?") and participate in an art activity. Explain to them that we are in a super cool, old growth forest. There are so many interesting things hiding around every corner. Tell them to use their owl eyes and look around!
2. Before you walk to the station, conduct a series of brief questions to gain where the students' knowledge lies on the local plant ecology. It's possible that previous stations may have provided some knowledge. Stop and ask them if they can identify different species along the way. (Ask: "what do you notice between this leaf and another species' leaf?" "What do you notice about that trees' bark?" etc.)

Step 2. Plant ID Activity (20 minutes)

1. Start with a 5 minute walk to the station. This activity will test the students' memories by having them collect and identify plants, shrubs, and trees. While walking to the station, secretly collect 5-12 parts of different types of local plants (leaves, fruit, bark chunks, sticks, berries, etc). Be sure that when you collect, only select plants that are already littered on the ground. If there isn't anything littered on the ground, you may pick a plant if it grows in abundance. Be sure to tell students that if they need to pick a plant, they need to ask a leader first, as well as the plant.
2. Have all of the students turn their backs while you lay the plant parts onto the bandana. Cover them with a second bandana and explain the game: After lifting the bandana off the items, students will have 30 seconds to look at them. Their goal will be to memorize *everything* they can see and *where* it is; take a "mental photograph". This should take about 2 minutes.

3. Cover the items back up. Give students 5 minutes to gather the same parts and arrange them exactly as they were under the bandana.
4. After the time is up, ask them if they want to see it again. Then let them make their final arrangements. This should take about 3 minutes.
5. The educators will then point to the different things students collected and ask them to make observations about them. As you transition between each plant, if they don't already know, tell them the name of the plant and a fact or two about it. *Use the plant profiles on the next few pages for reference.*

Sit spot and Watercoloring (30 minutes)

1. Educators split students up to work independently but encourage them to have full autonomy over what nonhuman living thing they will sit with. The initial step for the activity is a sit-spot activity (10 minutes) done for internal inquiry and a meditative response.
 - a. A sit spot is designed to be a place that you go often to get out into nature, get a wild feeling, and relieve stresses and tensions. Help students find a place that they like and encourage them to use *all* of their senses to really get to know their landscape and plant.
2. Students will have 10 minutes to draw in pencil onto both of their bookmarks with the opportunity to use ink pens to add depth and furthered detail.
3. After students complete their drawings, educators will provide the plot twist of getting to watercolor their bookmarks. If it's raining then that's a bonus; they could essentially use rain water to create their color. We will provide a demonstration on how to watercolor. This should take about 5 minutes.
4. For 10 minutes, students will then be able to pair up if watercolor sets are limited and collaborate on their watercoloring.

Step 4. Assessing Understanding (5 minutes)

Take a few moments to have students write about their experience in their journals/passports (length of this exercise really depends on the amount of time left and the dynamic of the class; read the group). This is so they can reflect on the activity they just did. Ask them to briefly address the following questions in their journals:

- What type of plant did they draw/watercolor? Can they identify it?
- List 3 observations about it.
- Why did they choose it? What drew them to it? Was it because they liked the shape or color? Or because they liked the way it grows? Anything else?

Step 5. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

Students will have an encouraging opportunity to show and tell their artwork and experience, regardless of their artistic success as the purpose of this is not to be the best painter (encourage it not being a competition). Students will be asked to identify the species they worked with. Have each student (one by one) show their artwork up for others to see and tell the class about it. They can use their journal entry bullet points from Step 4 to help them decide what to say.