

# Native Plant Identification and Collection

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## Objectives

Learner will be able to:

- Collect and press native plants. (sketch plants in field journal)
- Identify distinguishing characters of plants.
- Use field guides and/or dichotomous keys to identify plants (depending on level of students and course).
- Identify native plants by common and scientific name.
- Categorize plants by family, genus, and species.
- Create booklet, journal, file, file box, or notebook of native plant specimens.
- Act in a safe and mature manner in the field and lab.

## Materials

Field journals or paper booklet to transport plants specimens, native plant field guides and/or dichotomous keys, plant presses or cardboard and books for pressing, contact paper or packaging tape, depending on plant storage method: file folders, 3 ring binders, or 5 x 8 inch note cards and ring or storage box.

## Lesson Plan

### Day 1:

1. Set guidelines for being outside as a class. Define limits, set expectations, review purpose of field activity.
2. Assign partners for plant collection.
3. As a class walk quietly to field location (could instruct students to walk single file and observe surroundings silently.)
4. Instruct students to collect plant specimens carefully, taking enough of a sample to see necessary characters, but without damaging entire plant or general population.
5. Determine number and/or species of plants expected to be collected.
6. Students should keep samples in journal or paper booklet. For each plant take note of plant's location and date collected. Using field guides, students may begin to identify plants in the field and make notes in journal.
7. Take plant samples back to lab and carefully arrange and press in plant presses. (Stacks of cardboard and text books may also be used.) Keep track of which plant is which by numbering them in field book and on paper in plant presses. Leave until plants have been effectively pressed and dried (may take multiple days.)

### Day 2:

When plants are dry and pressed students will create a booklet, notebook, file box, file folder, or journal of native plants.

1. Determine whether students will put specimens in a notebook, journal, file folder, booklet, or on note cards in a file box or on a ring.
2. Instruct students to carefully lay plant specimens on paper (depending on what they are making) and cover plant with contact paper or packaging tape to preserve them. Leave room next to specimen or on back of paper to write name and characters of plant.
3. Instruct students to use field guides and dichotomous keys to identify plants and classify them by family, genus and species. Students should write distinguishing characters and common and scientific names of each plant. (Note: Preteaching on use of field guides and dichotomous keys may be necessary. Also, depending on level of course and students, instructor may choose to aid in plant identification. Some keys are very difficult to find at the appropriate level.)
4. Students should put plants in order by family.

## Assessment

1. Completion of personal field guide to local plants.
2. Test students on local plant specimens with or without the use of their specimens and notes.

## Alternate Plan

Instead of collecting plants, instruct students to sketch plants, noting distinguishing characters in field. Drawings must be detailed. Then have students work in lab to identify plants using keys and field guides based on their drawings. Preteaching of plant sketching and making accurate observations is necessary to do this.