

Weeds – Wild and Wonderful

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Standard Statement(s):

4.5.7, C-explain various IPM practices used in society

Content Objective(s):

- 1) audience will list 5 common weeds and tell how they were used by early Americans
- 2) audience will recognize that the term “weed” is a social construct
- 3) audience will discuss differences between modern and historical IPM practices

Assessment Strategies:

discussion

Procedures:

Hand out plant samples to members of the audience. Ask if they recognize these plants. Allow time for answers. Ask what they’d do if these plants were growing in their yards. Go over the idea that the term “weed” is an individual notion. While today we consider all of these plants as weeds, our ancestors depended on them for food and useful everyday items. They would not have pulled them out of front yards, but rather rejoiced at the fact that they had such good fortune. We spend countless hours and dollars trying to get rid of the very plants that sustained our forefathers.

Go over the plant samples and describe their historical uses.

Dogbane-string, cordage

Horsetail-sandpaper

Mullein leaf-shoe insole

Teasel-comb

New Jersey tea-dye

Chicory-coffee substitute

Willow-aspirin substitute

Sumac-spiles for maple sugaring

Bouncing bet-soap

Cleavers-strainer

*****whatever plants are available at the time**

End the session by serving up some wild edibles that our ancestors would have savored:

Milkweed pods au gratin

Lambs quarters-dip/flan/or lasagna

Cattail curry soup

Oxalis-a tart trail nibble

Day lily buds-a cooked vegetable

Suggested Level:

General public, mixed ages

Standard Category:

4.5 IPM

Materials:

Various plant samples

Sandpaper

String

A Dr. Scholl’s insole

A comb

Can of coffee

Bayer aspirin

Pre-made food items

Fabric dye

Instructional Strategies:

Lecture

Questioning

Discussion

Observation

References:

Wild Edibles by Bradford Angier
Magic and Medicine of Plants by Reader's Digest
Peterson Guide to Edible Plants
The Wild Foods Trail Guide by Alan Hall
Wild Food Gourmet by Ann Gardon
The Weed Cookbook by Adrienne Crowhurst

Related Web Sites: