



The Confederated Tribes  
of Grand Ronde

# PLANTS

Early Childhood Education  
Tribal Curriculum



## Introduction

Plants have always played a vital role in the lives of tribal communities around the world. They have provided food, medicine, shelter, and spiritual guidance for generations. Understanding the importance of plants and their relationship with our environment is essential for young children to learn and appreciate. In this early childhood curriculum, we will explore the diverse world of plants through hands-on activities, storytelling, and cultural teachings. By connecting children with the natural world around them, we hope to instill a deep respect and appreciation for the plants that sustain us and the earth we call home.





# Day One

## Book: “KwisKwis Takes a Walk” by Cheyanne Heidt

Read Aloud Link: <https://youtu.be/V43WWT9m9io>

Enter the vibrant world of KwisKwis, the curious and adventurous chipmunk, as he sets off on an exciting journey through the forest in "KwisKwis Takes A Walk." In this captivating story, we will discover beautiful colors that fill our environment - from the bright yellow sun to the soft purple camas flowers. Join KwisKwis on an enchanting adventure that celebrates the kaleidoscope of colors found in nature, and let your imagination soar as we explore the wonders of the natural world together.

## Literacy: Native Plant Letter Matching

Skill: Letter Recognition

Use the "PNW Plant Color Flashcards" to play a matching game. These cards feature letters and pictures of different native plants found in the Pacific Northwest in different colors. Have students match the letter and picture cards to the corresponding color card based on the color of the plant. As students match their cards, work with them to identify each color, first letter of the color, and plant (if possible) as they go.

## Math: Patterning with Plants

Skill: Patterning

Gather different types of leaves or flowers from outside (if possible, gather plants shown on the Native Plants Flashcards). Show students the plants that have been gathered, talk about their colors and sizes. Then, we use the gathered leaves and flowers to create a pattern on a piece of paper. Demonstrate to students how to create a repeating pattern like leaf, flower, leaf, flower (ABAB) or an AABB pattern like leaf, leaf, flower, flower.

## Art: Leaf Rubbing

Collect leaves from different plants and have the children place them under a piece of paper. Using crayons or pencils, have them rub over the leaves to create a colorful print of the leaf shape. When students are finished, present students with the Native plants flashcards. Have them match their leaf rubbing to the plant the leaf came from.



## Day Two

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### **Book Suggestions: A Day with Yayah, The First Blade of Sweetgrass, Planting a Rainbow**

Purchase Links:

- [A Day with Yayah](#)
- [The First Blade of Sweetgrass](#)
- [Planting a Rainbow](#)

### **Literacy: Alphabet Garden**

Skill: Letter Recognition and Sound Awareness

Create an alphabet garden by labeling plants (real or artificial) with letters of the alphabet (see "Native Plant Letter Flashcards" below). Have children search for the letters and sound them out as they find them. This activity can be used as a small station rotation or in combination with another literacy activity if needed.

### **Math: Flower Sorting**

Skill: Observation, Sets and Classifying

Provide children with a variety of Native plants and flowers (real or artificial) and ask them to sort them by color, size, or shape.

# Sensory Bin: Garden

## Materials

*Plastic or real flowers of various types (e.g. roses, sunflowers, daisies, carnations)*

*Colored sand or rice*

*Plastic tweezers*

*Parts of a Plant Poster*

*Optional: Felt flowers, flower petals, silk flowers, flower color cards*

## Activity Ideas

Give each child a pair of tweezers and ask them to pick up the plastic flowers and transfer them to a separate container.

Encourage the children to sort the flowers based on type or color.

Take a poster or printout of flower anatomy and discuss it with the children.

Help the children identify the different parts of a flower such as seeds, petals, stem, leaf, and roots.

Encourage the children to find the different parts of the flower using the plastic flowers in the sensory bin.



## Day Three

### Book: "Camas" by Kathy Cole

Read Aloud Link: <https://youtu.be/V43WWT9m9io>

In "Camas," young readers will learn all about the fascinating plant that has been a vital part of Native American tribes' cultures for centuries. Camas, with its beautiful purple flowers, was not only an important food source for many tribes, but it also played a significant role in their spiritual practices

and traditions. Follow along as readers immerse themselves in the world of camas, discovering how it was harvested, prepared, and enjoyed by Native peoples throughout history.

## Literacy: Camas Worksheets

Skill: Visual Discrimination (c), Letter Formation

Provide the "Letter Tracing Worksheet" that includes the letter "c" and the word "camas". Students can trace over the letters to reinforce letter formation and discrimination. Then, provide students with the "Letter Detective Worksheet" for the letter "c". Instruct students to color each flower that has the letter "c" inside

## Math: The Camas Process

Skill: Sequencing

After reading the book "Camas" by Kathy Cole, provide students with the "Camas Sequence Cards" - which display photos of the different stages camas goes through, from harvest to being eaten. Using the Camas Sequence Map, challenge students to place the pictures in the correct order, discussing and explaining the camas processing steps as they go.

## Art: Plant Collage

Set up a table with different types of plants, such as flowers, leaves, and twigs. Let the children create a collage by gluing the different plant parts onto a piece of paper. Talk about the different types of plants and help the children identify them using the Native plant flashcards.



## Day Four

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### Book: Berry Song by Michaela Goade

Purchase Link: [Berry Song](#)

### Literacy: Berry Hunt (Details)

Skill: Focusing on Detail

After reading the book "Berry Song", use the "Berries of the PNW" photo cards to show students pictures of various types of berries and explain what they are called and what they look like. Spread the pictures or real berries out on a table or rug and encourage the students to examine them closely, looking for particular details such as color, size, shape, and texture. Encourage the children to use descriptive words to talk about the berries. Use colored pencils or markers to have the children draw

pictures of the different types of berries they collected. As a group, discuss the different details the children noticed while examining the berries and their drawings. Encourage children to compare and contrast the different types of berries based on their observations. Finally, arrange the drawings on a bulletin board or wall to create a visual representation of the different types of berries and the details that make them unique.

## **Math: Berry Hunt (Counting)**

Skill: Comparing & Counting, Graphing

Place a variety of paper "berries" around the classroom. Provide students with a small basket or bag to collect their berries. Allow time for students to go "berry picking" around the classroom. After students have collected all of the berries, help the children identify the different types of berries and count how many of each type they collect. Use the "Berries of the PNW" photo cards if needed. Record the number of each berry found on a chart in front of the class.

## **Sensory Bin: Berries**

### ***Materials***

***Various types of berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, blackberries)***

***Sensory bin or container***

***Plastic cups, spoons, and tongs***

***Optional: Magnifying glasses, berry-themed books, berry-scented playdough***

### ***Activity Ideas***

Ask questions to promote sensory exploration, such as: What do the berries feel like? What do they smell like? What colors do you see? Are they heavy or light?

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Provide plastic cups, spoons, and tongs to promote fine motor skills through sorting and scooping.

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Ask the children to sort the berries by color, size, or type.

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Encourage the children to use the tongs to pick up the berries and transfer them to different cups or containers.

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## Book Suggestions: Tree: A Peek-Through Picture Book, Tall Tall Tree: A Nature Book for Kids About Forest Habitats, Stand Like a Cedar

Purchase Links:

- [Tree: A Peek-Through Picture Book](#)
- [Tall Tall Tree: A Nature Book for Kids About Forest Habitats](#)
- [Stand Like a Cedar](#)

## Literacy: The Rhyming Tree

Skill: Rhyme Awareness

Using the "Rhyming Tree Flashcards", start by showing the children a picture of a tree and talk about its features. Then, introduce the next picture card and say the word out loud. Encourage the children to listen carefully to the word and identify any words they know that rhyme with it. Have them repeat the word and any rhyming words back to you. Repeat this with the remaining picture cards. To reinforce their understanding, invite the students to complete the "Rhyming Tree Worksheet". Students will cut out the words and pictures that rhyme with "tree" from the provided list and glue them inside the tree image.

## Math: Tree Math

Skill: Measurement

Begin by introducing "measurement" to the students by explaining that it is a way to figure out the size of things. Give examples such as measuring the length of a book or the height of a person. Next, use the "Trees of the PNW" Fact Posters to display pictures of different types of trees and ask the children if they know what they are. Explain that each tree is unique and different in size. Discuss with students how some trees are tall and some trees are short. Give examples of which trees are taller than others. Then, pass out the "PNW Tree Cut-Outs". Ask the children to line up the tree pictures in order from shortest to tallest or vice versa. Finally, have students complete the "Tall, Taller, Tallest" Worksheet to confirm understanding of concepts.

## Science: Tree Habitat

Begin the activity by asking the students if they know what a habitat is. Explain that a habitat is a place where plants and animals live and grow. Ask questions like "What animals live in trees?" and

"How can we tell if a tree is providing shelter for an animal?" Next, show students the "Tree Habitat Posters" and ask the students what they see. Explain that trees are not only a home for birds but also several other animals such as squirrels, insects, and spiders. Show "Tree Habitat Animals" picture cards to students and explain how the animals adapt to living in the tree habitat. (For example, squirrels have sharp claws and strong legs that help them climb trees, while spiders spin webs to catch their prey.) Allow the students to discuss how these adaptations are useful to the animals.

**Activity Idea:**

Allow each student to select a paper animal from the "Tree Habitat Animals" cut-outs and a paper tree. Using glue, have the students attach their paper animal to the tree they have chosen. Have students color their tree and animal. Optional: Discuss what types of things the animal would need to survive in the tree and have students add those elements to their picture.

**Optional:** take the students for a walk outside and look for trees in the area. Ask them to look for any signs of animals living in the trees (e.g. nests, animal droppings, etc.) and talk about how trees are important for animals in their community.



# Additional Resources

## Inquiry-Based Activities

### Predict & Observe

Provide students with different kinds of seeds, both flower and vegetable, and encourage them to make predictions about what will happen when the seeds are planted. Help them plant the seeds in soil and water them regularly, and then encourage the children to observe the changes that occur, including germination, sprouting, and growth.

### Exploring Plants

Take the students on a nature walk around the school or playground. Look for different plants and talk about their colors, sizes, and textures. Let the children feel and smell the plants, and identify their different parts such as leaves, stems, and flowers.

### Life Cycle Sorting

Introduce the concept of life cycles to students with hands-on activities, like sorting and matching pictures of different parts of plants. For example, you can match pictures of seeds to pictures of adult plants, or match pictures of flowers to pictures of fruit.

### Explore with Senses

Invite students to explore different types of plants with their senses. Provide a variety of plants with different textures, smells, and colors for children to touch and smell. Encourage children to describe what they feel, see, and smell.

### Plant Models

Using clay or playdough, have the students create their own model of a plant and its parts. Encourage them to create roots, stems, leaves, and flowers to help them understand how plants grow.

## Links to Materials

[Berries of the PNW Pictures](#)

[Camas Sequence Cards](#)

[PNW Plant Color Flashcards](#)

[Rhyming Tree Worksheet](#)

[Native Plant Letter Flashcards](#)

[Camas Sequence Map](#)

[PNW Tree Cut-Outs](#)

[Tall, Taller, Tallest Worksheet](#)

[Parts of a Plant Poster](#)

[Camas Worksheet](#)

[Rhyming Tree Picture Cards](#)

[Tree Habitat Animal Cards/Cut-Outs](#)

[Tree Habitat Posters](#)

[Trees of the PNW Posters](#)

## Suggested Additional Materials

[Because of an Acorn by Lola M. Schaefer & Adam Schaefer](#)

[Exploring Nature Activity Book for Kids: 50 Creative Projects to Spark Curiosity in the Outdoors by Kim Andrews](#)

[Curious Kids Nature Guide: Explore the Amazing Outdoors of the Pacific Northwest by Fiona Cohen](#)

[Tall Tall Tree: A Nature Book for Kids About Forest Habitats by Anthony D. Fredericks](#)



Culture as Health - April 28th Camas Kids Culture Circle



Culture as Health - July 7th Berry Kids Culture Circle



Culture As Health - July 21st ulali Family Culture Circle

## Teacher Preparation Suggestions

- Print Berries of the PNW Pictures
- Print copies of Camas Sequence Cards & Map (for each student)
- Print copies of Camas Worksheets ((for each student)
- Print & cut PNW Tree Cut Outs (for each student)
- Print copies of Rhyming Tree Worksheet (for each student)
- Print copies of Tall, Taller, Tallest Worksheet (for each student)
- Print copies of Tree Habitat Animals Cut-Outs (for each student)
- Print copies of tree outline (for each student)
- Gather plant/flower samples