

Nature Sleuths Scavenger Hunt

By Alisa Hove and Sara Healey

Materials and Equipment

- Nature journals (simple composition books that the students write in throughout the year)
- Scotch tape
- Colored pencils
- Regular pencils
- Checklist for students and chaperones to keep track of what students are finding and describing. See document titled “Scavenger Hunt Checklists”.

Goals

- Provide an opportunity for students to practice identifying and describing different plant phenophases
- Provide an opportunity for students to practice making careful observations and drawing plants

Pre-Activity Preparation

1. Create places in each student’s nature journal for the child to note his/her observations. In each student’s nature journal, create a page for each item that he/she will find. This page will remind each student to: tape each item to the page, draw the item in detail, and write five words that describe it.
2. For example, a page for buds would like this:

<p><i>Bud</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tape it: • Draw it: • Write 5 words that describe your bud:

We made pages for buds, open flowers, grass, herbs, shrubs, evergreen, fruits, and deciduous plants.

Activity

1. Walk with students into the phenology garden or into a natural area. There is a park next to the Boys and Girls Club with a nice creekside trail where we conduct many of our activities.
2. Ask the students to divide up into teams of two students. Each student in the pair should have his/her nature journal, a pencil, and a set of colored pencils.
3. Provide each pair of students with Scotch Tape and a checklist. **Note:** this part of the activity can be omitted for groups working in areas where it isn't appropriate to collect plants, such as in national parks.
4. Describe the goal of the scavenger hunt to the students. Remind them that this is **not** a race. It is most important to have made careful drawings and observations of each plant phenophase and each plant life stage.
5. Allow the students to explore for 30 minutes. Chaperones can be walking around and checking in with teams to help them ID phenophases and come up with observations (if this help is needed only!).
6. After 30 minutes, have the students sit in a circle with their nature journals.
7. Have students show their findings to the group (10-15 minutes). Things to reflect on include, but are not limited to:
 - How many different kinds of each item did we find?
 - Was one phenophase harder to find than another? Was one phenophase easier to find?
 - What are some words that describe the open flowers that you found? Buds? Fruits? Etc.
 - Could you find these phenophases if we went to another place?



Nature Sleuths Scavenger Hunt!

For every group of 2 students, find the following:

A plant with:

- bud
- emerging leaves
- open flowers
- fruit

A plant that is:

- a grass
- an herb (not grass)
- a shrub
- an evergreen

****Remember it is NOT a race. You must have amazing, sleuth-worthy pictures and observations! Have fun!**



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