

20 – 30
Minute
Activity For
Any Age

Mapping Your Local Plants

Mapping the area around us is a great tool in becoming more aware and engaged with what's happening in our local natural environment. Here is an activity that you and your family can do to deepen your connection to the natural environment around you.

Activity: Head outside to your backyard, community street or local greenspace. With paper and a pen start by creating a map of your backyard or local area. Use as much detail as you would like to lay out your map and to identify any landmarks that should be incorporated. Next, pick 3-5 different plants in the area you are mapping and add them to your map. These plants can be large trees, flowers, shrubs, vines, etc. Feel free to draw them in and label them by name, if you know them, or by assigning them a number. Once you've completed mapping your area and the different plants in it, spend a few minutes observing and identifying each plant. When observing, it is important to pay close attention to what you notice and record these observations. Use the questions below to help guide you. You should now have a good collection of information about these plants that you can use to identify them!

Use this link to help identify your local plants:

<https://gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org/simple/>

Other Plant Identification Resources:

- Ask a parent, older sibling or family member.
- Dig around the family bookshelf to see if there is a plant book or field guide.
- Try an App: PlantSnap, NatureGate and PictureThis.

Notice Any Changes?

After a few days return to all the plants that you marked on your map and observe them again. Now that time has passed can you notice any changes?

- Has anything changed or grown?
- Is the colour different?
- Is the plant bigger?
- Are there any leaves?
- Is there any difference in smell?

Record the changes you observed. If you couldn't identify the plant before maybe now with more information you can!

What To Observe When Identifying A Plant:

- What is the branch structure like?
- Does it have any leaves? Do they come in bunches?
- What colour are they?
- Does it have any flowers?
- Does it have a particular smell?
- What colour is it?
- Any features like thorns, spikes or bumps
- Does it have bugs around it?
- Does it look like it is growing at all?
- Does it have any seeds?



(photo from: <https://www.tes.com/lessons>)

Materials Needed:

- Paper
- Pen or pencil
- Camera – Optional