

Trees & Plants

What to do

1. Show the children two healthy green plants.
2. Explain that the class is going to do an experiment to see if plants need water to live and to grow.
3. Label one plant WATER and the other NO WATER.
4. Let the children water the plant labeled WATER as needed.
5. Ask the children to predict what will happen to each plant.
6. After two weeks, compare the two plants. Discuss the results. The dead plant could be put in a compost pile.

More to do

More science. Have each child plant a seed in a cup of soil to take home. (Marigold seeds grow quickly.)

■ Cindy Winther, Oxford, MI

Living Trees

3+

Science skills

Children compare types of evergreens by touching and observing.

Materials

Branches, bark, needles, pine cones of evergreen trees

What to do

1. Place the evergreen materials on a large table and let the children explore them.
2. Talk about the various types of evergreen branches and needles. Explain that these are from living trees.
3. Take a walk in a park where there are evergreen trees and ask the children to point them out. Compare them in terms of size and shape.

■ Brenda Miller, Olean, NY

Nature Viewer

3+

Science skills

Children learn about flowers through collecting and drying blossoms.

Materials

Collecting basket or box
Newsprint
White typing paper
Three-ring binder or notebook

Drying table or floor area
Heavy books
White glue in squeeze bottle
Plastic sleeves for three-ring binder

Trees & Plants

What to do

1. Take the children for a walk and collect a variety of blossoms in a basket or box. Try to identify the blossoms as you collect them.
2. Select a drying area that can be left undisturbed for several days, such as a table or a corner of the floor, and spread out several sheets of clean newsprint.
3. Have the children arrange the blossoms on the newsprint so they are not touching and cover them with another sheet of clean newsprint. Place some heavy books on top and leave undisturbed for three days.
4. Remove the books and the top layer of newsprint. Demonstrate how to carefully peel away any blossoms stuck to the newsprint. Ask the children to help.
5. Invite the children to create interesting arrangements with the dried blossoms on white paper. Tell them they can arrange the blossoms by color, size or type, or just put one blossom on a page. The children then glue on the blossoms one at a time. Allow to dry overnight.
6. When dry, carefully slip the glued blossom paper into the plastic sleeve and place it in the three-ring binder. Continue until all the blossom papers have been inserted in the book.
7. Place the book in an area of the classroom where everyone can enjoy it.

More to do

Art: Use the dried blossoms to decorate note cards or create framed pictures with blossoms. When plastic sleeves will not be used, cover the blossoms with clear adhesive plastic or wide shipping tape to protect them. ■ Create pictures with leaves instead of blossoms. ■ Use pictures of flowers and leaves from gardening magazines in place of real items.

Original poem

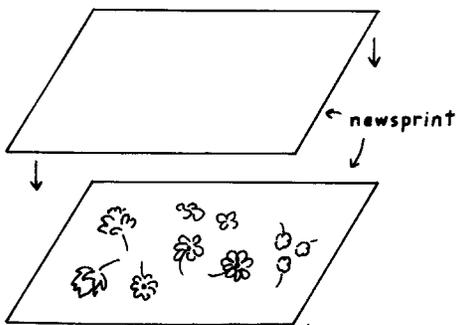
Blossom Fingerplay by MaryAnn Kohl © 1997

Little blossom, closed up tight, (hold one hand up like a fist, fingers and palm up)

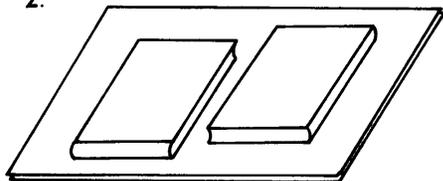
Start to grow with all your might. (begin to unfold a few fingers slowly)

Big sun warm you, help you grow, (use other hand to send rays of sunlight)

1.

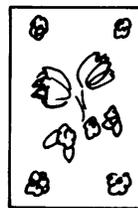


2.



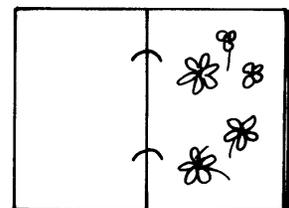
Weight newsprint and blossoms with heavy books.

3.



Glue flowers onto page and put in plastic sleeve.

4.



Put pages together in binder.

Trees & Plants

Rain drops feed you, here you go. (use other hand to send raindrops, while opening blossom more and more)
When your time is almost right, (peek through visor of other hand at blossom)

BURST! and BLOOM! Oh, what a sight! (explode both hands into one fully formed flower, turning it and looking at it with proud admiration)

Related books

Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes
The Empty Pot by Demi
First Comes Spring by Anne Rockwell
Planting a Rainbow by Lois Ehlert
Plants That Never Ever Bloom by Ruth Heller
This Year's Garden by Cynthia Rylant

MaryAnn F. Kohl, Bellingham, WA

Mr. Day and Mr. Night

4+

Science skills

Children experiment with light and plants and draw conclusions.

Materials

Styrofoam cups
Potting soil
Geranium seeds
Paper labels
Glue
Digging sticks
Crayons
Watering can

What to do

1. Discuss what plants need to live: water, sunlight and soil.
2. Give each child two Styrofoam cups to fill with soil and a few geranium seeds.
3. Have the children color two labels each. One should say "Mr. Day" and the other "Mr. Night." Have children glue the labels on their plant cups.
4. Explain that the class will be conducting an experiment to see how important light is to the growth of a plant.
5. Invite the children to place Mr. Night plants in a dark spot, such as a classroom closet, and Mr. Day plants in a sunny place.
6. For three weeks, children water their plants and monitor the growth patterns.
7. After three weeks, tell the children to compare their Mr. Day and Mr. Night plants. Which plant is the largest? Greenest? Healthiest looking? Ask the children why they think one is larger than the other. What did Mr. Day have that Mr. Night did not? Why is sunlight necessary for the plants?

Lisa M. Lang, Parkersburg, WV