



Plants and their jobs

These plant profile cards can be used to familiarise younger learners with different plants, and how they can be useful for people and nature. Each card features a name and image of a plant, as well as a fun fact or two! You can also download the set of blank cards and create your own plant profiles for your group to explore.

This activity plan outlines different ways these cards can be used to facilitate exploration of different plants – through simple games, sorting and discussion. Once familiar with the plants, they can be used to think about what types of plants learners might like to grow in their outdoor space.

Teaching time

15–30 minutes, flexible depending on use

Learning outcomes

- Recognising that plants can be helpful to humans and animals
- Understanding some similarities and differences between plants
- Being able to take turns and communicate with others during an activity

If you'd like to create your own plant cards using the blank set, these can be edited by opening the file in Adobe Acrobat Reader and adding images and text into the boxes. Landscape, rather than portrait images will work best.

Step by step

Print out two copies of the cards and play a game of memory or 'snap!' as a warm up or introduction. To play memory, lay the cards out face down and have learners take it in turns to turn over one card and then another. The aim is to remember the placement of the cards and find a matching pair. Alternatively, 'snap!' can also be played in a pair with each learner having one set of cards. For younger learners, an adult can read the name and facts aloud when a pair is found.

Sorting and grouping: As a whole group or in smaller groups, can learners explore the cards to notice similarities and differences between the plants? After taking some time to get to know the cards, ask learners to choose how they would group them: e.g. colourful flowers, smelly plants, plants humans can eat, plants good for wildlife...

What are these plants good for? Can learners think about ways these plants are helpful for nature and/or people? This could be facilitated as a whole group discussion by choosing a plant card, for example, marigold, and asking why wildlife might like it, and why people might like it?

Reflection

What would we like to grow? Once familiar with the cards, learners can use them to start thinking about what they might like to grow in their space. Open a discussion with the group to select their favourite(s) and why they like them. Where could we grow them? You could take learners outside and walk around the site with the cards, or pin them to a map of the space.

Green Skills



Suitable for

Early Years
Key Stage 1

Location

Indoors
Outdoors

Season

Spring
Summer
Autumn
Winter

What you'll need

Plant cards – one set per pair or group, depending on use/activity

Optional: examples of real plants for learners to look at, touch and smell

Key vocabulary

Names of plants
Colours and words to describe plants

Support and extension opportunities

If you can, it may be helpful to have examples of real plants while using these cards, so that learners can familiarise themselves with their appearance, feel and smell.

If you have existing plants already in your site, why not use the blank cards to create profiles for them? Older learners could create their own cards from the blank set, drawing a picture of the plants they can find outside – what can they find out about that plant?

Younger learners can use these cards to focus on colours and shapes, with the names of plants read out by an adult. The icons next to each fact correspond to a benefit of the plant and can be used to sort cards by their function.



More information

If learners are interested in finding out more about the plants during the activity, you can use this information sheet to help - the care information below can be used to discuss which plants might be suitable for your site, as well as extra activities or uses for the plant:

Lavender

- Likes full sun
- Can cope in dry conditions once established
- *Activity idea: Flowers can be used to make lovely smelling lavender bags*

Sunflower

- Likes full sun
- Need lots of watering
- *Activity idea: Hold a sunflower race and see whose sunflower grows the tallest!*

Teasel

- Can grow in sun or partial shade, in almost any soil

Lamb's ear

- Likes full sun
- Can cope with hot and dry periods as well as intense bouts of rain
- Its hairy leaves can help clean the air!

Stinging nettles

- Can grow in almost any soil, in sun or shade
- You may already have these on your site - often considered a 'weed', but are fantastic for wildlife
- Can be used to make a homemade fertiliser

Rose

- Likes full sun
- Should be watered regularly in first few years
- Will grow and flower best if given additional feed

Rosemary

- Likes a warm, sunny location
- Can cope in dry conditions once established

Mint

- Likes full sun or partial shade
- Water in hot, dry weather
- Spreads easily, so best planted in containers

Apple tree

- Likes a warm, sunny space
- Dwarf trees can be planted in containers, but will need regular watering throughout the season
- New trees need regular watering, but established trees in the ground rarely need watering

Pot marigold

- Grows best in full sun
- Water in hot or dry spells
- Will self-seed, bringing more plants the following year!
- *Activity idea: Make a natural dye with the flowers*

Chamomile

- Grows best in full sun
- Grows quickly
- Easy to care for - water in dry spells
- *Activity idea: Try a tea making and tasting session*

Purple top

- Easy to grow in a warm, sunny spot
- Will need regular watering in pots, but in the ground will tolerate some drought



National Education Nature Park and Climate Action Awards

Symbols key

Wildlife benefits



Good for pollinators



Good for birds

Sensory qualities



Interesting to look at / Look closely



Fragrant / smelly plant



Interesting to touch



Edible plant



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