

Learning about Plants -- Leaves & Flowers

Purpose:

- Learn the basic types of leaves
- Create art work with leaves
- Practice one way to preserve flowers

Activity 1: Learning About Leaves

Supplies:

- Bring several leaves for each participant
- 2-3 pieces of white paper for each youth
- crayons

Have participants name characteristics that make leaves different from one another. Examples are color, size, shape, leaf arrangement on the stem, texture, edges of leaves (margins).

- Show examples of different leaf attachments to stems – opposite and alternate
- Show different sizes of leaves, (rhubarb leaves and sugar beet leaves are great examples)
- Show different shapes of leaves
- Show how the edges of leaves are different (smooth or jagged)
- Show how texture of leaves are different (lamb's ear is a great example).

Have participants place a leaf between two sheets of white paper. With the leaf pressed between, color back and forth on the top paper to make an outline of the leaf underneath. Fold the paper to make a note card for someone.

Activity 2: Leaf Pressing

Supplies:

- Iron on medium temperature, and a towel or other table cover to iron on. Have a responsible youth or adult to assist with ironing
- Waxed Paper
- Leaves for each participant

1. Participants can pick out 2-3 leaves to place within waxed paper.
2. Fold waxed paper with waxy side inside and leaf between.
3. Help youth iron their leaves to preserve them.

Variations:

1. Put a string or ribbon into the waxed paper and the leaf can become an ornament.
2. Put a note in with waxed paper and leaf for a special message to someone. Use as a bookmark.
3. Cut a special shape from the waxed paper.

Activity 3: Preserving Flowers

Supplies:

- Borax
- Corn meal
- Measuring cups and mixing bowl
- Plastic container with lid for each youth
- Flowers (chrysanthemums work nicely)
- Salt (optional)

Put equal amounts of borax and corn meal in mixing bowl. Mix well.

Participants put a layer of "mix" (borax and corn meal) into their containers, then a sprig of flowers. Chrysanthemums work well in fall and are reasonable in price. Shake more "mix" over flowers until completely covered. Place lid over container.

Keep covered in a dry place for two weeks. Remove flowers gently after two weeks and they will be preserved. Adding 1 – 2 tablespoons salt to the "mix" will help keep the color more vivid.



**COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION**

3 activities for grades K - 4. Allow 45 minutes. Science Standard - Life Science
Colorado State University Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development