Learning from the Plants: Creating your own Food Guide

Activity adapted from the "ID a Tree" activity from the University of Manitoba's This is Indigenous Land camp, on page 5.

Students will complete this activity at the Elbow Lake Environmental Education Centre, using the Indigenous and Western Science Plant Guide found in the **Indigenous and WS Plant Knowledge.pdf.** If this activity is completed at a different local park, the teacher may have to explore the area first, in order to ensure that there are enough species variability in the park to learn about from the plant guide.

Part 1: Using Our Senses
Students will work in groups of 2 and will take turns being blindfolded. Partner 1 will be blindfolded first. Partner 2 will spot a plant in the park and lead Partner 1 over to it. Partner 1 will then use their senses (other than sight) to identify the plant. Partner 1 will vocalize what they feel and smell and Partner 1 will record these characteristics. Once Partner 1 has finished exploring that plant, they can take their blindfold off and see the plant. One group member will take a picture of the plant for the next activity. Partner 2 will now be blindfolded, and Partner 1 will lead them to a different plant. The time that the groups have to explore the plants is up to the teacher's discretion. Students may use the template below for recording their groups observations.

Part 2: Using Previous Knowledge
Once students have completed the senses activity, students will create a document that includes their pictures of the plants, and their own descriptions. Now, however, students will need to know the names of the plants they explored, the gifts of that plant, and the names of the plants in Anishinaabemowin and Kanyen'kéha. For this purpose, students may use the **Indigenous and Western Science Plant Guide.pdf**, as well as videos footage embedded on the QUILLS website of local Métis and Ojibwe Knowledge Keeper Deb St. Amant providing plant teachings to identify the plant as well as its food and medicinal uses.

By the end of their research, they should have created their own Food Guide.

To reflect on this activity, students can be asked the following questions:

- How did using your senses to explore the plant help you understand it?
- Do the physical characteristics of the plant help you see/understand their uses and gifts they provide for us?
- Would using our senses, experiences, and access to previous knowledge help us to understand how plants might change in the future?
- How might this activity be different for someone living in Iqaluit, Nunavut? Or, in Carcross, Yukon?

Part 3: Sharing Our Knowledge (Optional)
Students may then share their food guides with other students and create a classroom food guide.
Data

Plant #1 Common Name: _____

Picture	Observations	Name in Anishinaabemowin	Name in Kanyen'kéha	Food Use	Medicinal Use

Plant #2 Common Name: _____

Picture	Observations	Name in Anishinaabemowin	Name in Kanyen'kéha	Food Use	Medicinal Use

Plant #3 Common Name: _____

Picture	Observations	Name in Anishinaabemowin	Name in Kanyen'kéha	Food Use	Medicinal Use