



## Plants as Good Relatives

### Organization:

**Title:** Plants as Good Relatives

**Summary:** Students will explore the Haudenosaunee Ohèn:ton Karihwatéhkwen (The Words That Come Before All Else). Students then participate in an experiment focused on whether indoor plants have an impact on humans.

**Inquiry Question:** Inquiry Question 5: How can Humans Interact with Plants in a Respectful and Sustainable Manner that Promotes Biodiversity?

**Duration:** 25 minutes

**Learning Environment:** Indoor

**Season:** All

### Materials:

- Youtube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0PztCBgXxio>
- Video segment embedded on QUILLS website of Kanyen'kehá:ka (Wolf Clan) educator Liv Rondeau sharing the Ohèn:ton Karihwatéhkwen.
- Section in short ten-minute video accompanying the Gifts of the Earth Bundle video featuring Kanyen'kehá:ka (Wolf Clan) educator Liv Rondeau discussing the significance of the Ohèn:ton Karihwatéhkwen.
- Plants as Good Relatives.pptx

### Curriculum Links:

Science and Technology: A1.1, A1.2, A1.5, B1.2, B1.3, B2.1, B2.8

### Meta Data:

**Content Type:** Activity, Language Learning

**Bundle:** Gifts of the Earth, IK

**Theme:** Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Biodiversity Crisis

**Subject Area:** Biology, Environmental Education, Social Studies

**Curriculum Focus:** 7

**A Knowledge Keeper or community member should be present.**

### Instructions:

1. Ideally a Haudenosaunee community member can be invited to share the Ohèn:ton Karihwatéhkwen with the students.

2. Alternatively, students listen to a song containing the Ohèn:ton Karihwatéhkwen (in language: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0PztCBgXxio> ). (This is review from the Indigenous Knowledge Bundle). Students then read the address in English. <https://mbq-tmt.org/ohenton-karihwatehkwen/>



3. Students can also watch a video segment embedded on the QUILLS website of local Kanyen'kehá:ka (Wolf Clan) educator Liv Rondeau sharing the address. There is also a segment in the ten-minute video accompanying the Gifts of the Earth Bundle of Liv Rondeau discussing the significance of the address.

4. As the teacher explains that this is a Haudenosaunee address, the class can have a discussion regarding how the address reflects the Haudenosaunee values of interdependence and holism and helps to foster reciprocity with the natural world.

Discussion prompts:

- What would it mean if one thing was left out of the address?
- How do people fit into the address? (i.e: people are not any more important than the animals and plants that are given thanks to?)
- How might seeing plants, animals, the sky, and the land as equal to humans' impact how an individual interacts with the natural world?

### Western Science Connection

5. Students familiarize themselves with the study: *What are the benefits of plants indoors and why do we respond positively to them?* by Virginia Lohr (2010). Summary found on this interactive online tool <https://www.thinglink.com/card/1454563339790188547> If computer access isn't available, content can be found in the **Plants as Good Relatives.pptx**

6. From this information, students are tasked with developing their own study to support or refute the theory that indoor plants benefit people. Based on the different examples from the paper, students pick a topic and develop a hypothesis to test. Students can create a study themselves or do a survey to gain data related to their hypothesis. Students should be provided with choice regarding how their results are presented. I.e: orally, on a poster, in a report, in a PowerPoint presentation, etc.

Optional Extension:

1. As students learn about reciprocity and interconnectedness from the Ohèn:ton Karihwatéhkwén, students come up with something (stemming from their own culture or identity) that they can do every day to remind them of their relationship and interdependence with the natural world. Students should try this practice out for a couple weeks and then reflect on it. Did it change their perspective or their way of seeing the world? Did it help them be more mindful? Did it affect their energy throughout the day?



## QUILLS

Queen's University Indigenous Land-Based Learning STEM  
Queen's University Biological Station

The learning represented in this activity reflects Big Idea A. in the Indigenous Knowledge Learning Bundle: “Indigenous knowledge is contained in language and storytelling”. To help your students learn more about this Big Idea check out the Learning Activities titled: *Ohèn:ton Karihwatéhkwén (The Words that Come Before All Else)*, *The Importance of Storytelling*, and *Creation Stories and Language* found in the *Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being with the Natural World* Learning Bundle (Grades 7-10).