



Harvesting Materials from the Land

An Extension Activity

For an extension activity, students can research the harvesting times of different plants and determine why different species are harvested at different times. Information can be combined and presented on a classroom/community seasonal wheel.

Step 1 - Birch as an Example

Birch bark is used in the building of wigwams, but it also has many other uses in various Indigenous cultures. Walk through these resources to understand the harvesting timing and methods of Birch Trees.

1 [CBC Gem Stories from the Land: Wiigwaasabak - The Tree of Life](#)

Helen Pelletier, who is Anishinaabe from Fort Williams First Nation, shares with us the significance of the birch tree.

2 [Barking Up the Right Tree Blog](#)

Skye Haggerty, who is Métis, shares with us her family's birch tree harvesting process.

Then...

Walk through the following websites to understand the ecological role of Birch Trees.

1 [Adirondacks Forever Wild](#)

2 [BC Ministry of Forests](#)

3 [The Significance of Birch Trees](#)

Bob Bowles, shares with us the significance and roles of the birch tree.

Students should start to be thinking about how harvesting materials from the land at different times in the year can affect their growth and relationships with other beings.

Step 2 - Research

Students can then choose a plant of their interest that is harvested and answer the two questions through research.

1. Using Indigenous-based resources, when is the best time to harvest this plant?
2. What is the plant's ecological role? If it was harvested at the wrong time, how would its role be affected?

Encourage students to choose different species, and perhaps create a list on the board to keep track. Students can record their information however they like.

Step 3 - Seasonal Wheel

Use the resource [Chapter 10 - Seasonal Wheel: The Kwakwaka'wakw Ebb and Flow of Life by Gwixsisalás Emily Aitken](#) to learn more about making a seasonal wheel.

Reflection Questions

What do the harvesting strategies of materials from the land tell us about Indigenous Knowledges?

How do the harvesting strategies represent relationship, reciprocity and balance?

What specific harvesting strategies do you know or practice? Where/whom did you learn this from?

How is birch harvested and how does this affect its role in ecosystems?

Provides practice of valuing authorship, credit, and understanding place/community-based knowledge.

