



THE HEALING FOREST

A Nature & Forest Therapy Curriculum for Youth and Young Adults



PROJECT GET OUTDOORS, INC., 2024

Thank you to the generous donors who supported this project!



Carl & Verna Schmidt Foundation





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INTRODUCTION

I have been privileged to work in the environmental education field since 1994, at many incredible locations and for many amazing organizations and agencies. My career path has weaved in and out of nature centers, museums, show caves, parks and schools. For 25 years, I worked for Minnesota State Parks and had wonderful opportunities to develop a naturalist skill set and knowledge base I never could have gained elsewhere. In 2021, I enrolled in the Nature and Forest Therapy Guide certification training through the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy Guides (ANFT) and it changed my life!

Through this rigorous, 125-hour, 6-month training, I learned a multitude of incredible tips and wisdom to be able to guide people of all ages into nature in a way I had never been shown before. Other naturalist colleagues I have guided on forest bathing walks since receiving my training have dismissed the relevance of the ANFT training because forest therapy walks “look easy.” To them I say, these walks should look easy if the guide has been trained well!

Through the Nature and Forest Therapy Guide training, I was introduced to many new concepts and techniques including:

- ❖ Trauma informed approaches to guiding people in nature
- ❖ Recognizing edges or things that might cause participants to feel uneasy during the experience
- ❖ Facilitating the journey into liminality – where we lose track of time and space
- ❖ The importance of guiding participants across the threshold of incorporation – coming back to the present before closing the program
- ❖ Identification of local tea plants
- ❖ Crafting invitations that invite participants to engage their senses with the forest
- ❖ Facilitating a sharing circle
- ❖ Practicing impartiality while engaging with participants
- ❖ Holding space for participants to be their true selves
- ❖ Trusting the forest to work her healing magic; that each participant will receive what is meant to be for them
- ❖ How to move slowly with the rhythm of nature
- ❖ Giving myself and the group permission to just be still and quiet

After wrapping up my training, I began guiding forest therapy walks whenever and wherever I could. I led walks for many different groups in many different locations. I found a vast majority of participants were in awe of the experiences we shared and many were affected with deep emotion during these walks. Coming together in nature with others and holding space for each person to share their experience is powerful and often creates awe among participants.

In the meantime, I began to adapt some of these techniques for children. I piloted activities at a nearby school where I visited for monthly nature programming. The children had similar positive responses as the adults. I began thinking about how we might encourage more schools to incorporate simple nature therapy activities into classrooms and teaching about self-care.

After several conversations with a number of colleagues to explore possible ways to support educators, health care providers, mental health practitioners and others who work with youth in getting this training, I decided this was not going to happen unless I took some initiative to make it happen.

Project Get Outdoors is proud to lead this movement in Minnesota! We have worked tirelessly to find partners and donors to help us champion this effort through the Healing Forest project. From September 2023 – November 2024, the Healing Forest project supported 13 practitioners along their journey of becoming Nature and Forest Therapy Guides.

Our goal was to recruit 15 BIPOC practitioners who, once trained, would be able to share nature-based therapy with BIPOC youth and young adults experiencing trauma. The recruitment and retention efforts were intense for this project and we had three cohort members drop out part way through. We had to adapt expectations and timelines to make sure remaining cohort members were successful.

Our funding partners helped us advance the reach of this project by requiring cohort members to explore ways to connect with the Park Rx effort of prescribing time in nature. Several cohort members have identified ways to encourage time in nature to the clients, patients and students they serve.

We are excited to support the growth of this movement and to be able to empower more youth-serving service providers with forest therapy tools to share with underrepresented youth in Minnesota. We look forward to the coming years and seeing the many ways nature-based therapy will be blended into health care, education, social work and other sectors of community health.

We hope this curriculum will provide you with some simple activities and resources to engage young people with nature in a profound way. We hope through these activities, youth will better recognize the awesomeness of the world around them and see the many ways they are connected to everything...that they are part of nature and that connecting with nature can enhance their happiness and wellbeing.

Thank you for taking time to learn more about nature and forest therapy and considering ways to share this practice with the youth you serve. If you enjoy these activities, you may want to consider becoming a Nature and Forest Therapy Guide. You can learn more at <https://www.anft.earth/>.

Thank you to the awesome cohort members who helped pilot the Healing Forest project; Bucky, Jade, Eyita, Megan, Luisana, Gloria, Madeline, Laura, Nicole, Angela, Mary, Alexa and Fern.

In gratitude for you and the work you do with young people,



Founder
Project Get Outdoors, Inc.



THE MEDICINE FOREST



Description

In this activity, students will compare medicines commonly found in a household medicine cabinet or first aid kit to medicinal plants of the forest and learn how being in nature supports our wellbeing.

Objectives

Youth will be able to:

- ❖ Recognize the forest origins of modern medicine;
- ❖ Develop appreciation for the forest plants that sustain us;
- ❖ Recognize the health and wellbeing benefits of connecting with nature.

Materials

Medicine cards
Medicine plant cards
First aid kit
Labeled medicine bottles with herbs
Nature-based wellbeing wheel

Grades

5 - 12

Prep Time

5 minutes

Activity Length

30 - 45 minutes

Outline

1. Ask students to share words that come to mind when they think of medicine. How would they describe medicine?
2. Ask students where medicine comes from. Prescription medicines are synthetically made but their origins are from nature and plants.
3. Ask students to name some of the common household medicines they may have in their medicine cabinet or first aid kit at home.
4. Lay out the **medicine cards** on a table or desk as they are mentioned. Discuss the uses for each medicine.
5. For thousands of years, we have worked with nature; the forests, prairies, deserts, wetlands, oceans to find food and medicine for survival.
6. Have students reach into the first aid kit to pull out medicine bottles. Go around and have each student read the label on their bottle and match it to a medicine card on the table.
7. Reiterate how nature is our pharmacy, our grocery store, our school, our spa, our fitness center, our home. Everything we need is provided by nature.
8. Collect the medicine bottles and hand out **medicine plant cards**.
9. Take a walk around the school grounds or a nearby park or trail to search for plants that match the cards.

10. As they find plants that match the cards, have students share the information on their card.
11. Gather students together and collect their medicine plant cards. Explain that the time they just spent walking in nature provided medicine to their bodies.
12. Have students take turns spinning the **medicine wheel** to explore the various ways being in nature benefits the body.
 - Brain – Attention Restoration Theory
 - Heart – lower cortisol and blood pressure
 - Eyes – enhanced vision, fractal patterns
 - Ears – sounds stimulate calm
 - Nose – phytoncides, aroma therapy
 - Muscles – strengthen through exercise
13. Forests are important! They provide us with clean water, healthy soils, wildlife habitat, climate resilience, medicine, food and forest products, outdoor recreation and spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing. May the forest be with you!

APPENDIX RESOURCES

- Medicine cards
- Medicine plant cards
- Nature-based wellbeing wheel
- Labels for medicine bottles

Did you know?

Many modern medicines are derived from native knowledge. A 2001 study by the World Intellectual Property Organization estimated that more than 45% of medicinal patents belong to or are derived from native knowledge systems.



Our northern forests are extremely susceptible to climate change. You can help by planting climate resilient trees for your region.



Make Your Own Wellbeing Pouch

Description

In this activity, students discover how traditional medicine pouches provide spiritual healing and grounding. Students make their own wellbeing pouches and explore aspects of nature that help them feel happy, safe, strong, relaxed and calm.

Objectives

Youth will be able to:

- ❖ Explain people of many cultures maintain strong emotional health through the use of medicine pouches;
- ❖ Describe three natural items that bring them feelings of calm and wellbeing
- ❖ Recognize the health and wellbeing values of connecting with nature.

Materials

When Sophie Gets Angry, Really, Really Angry by Molly Bang

Here and Now by Julia Denos

Muslin pouches

Markers

Nature stamps

Fresh herbs

Yarn or jute string

Scissors

Grades

5 - 12

Prep Time

30 minutes

Activity Length

30 - 45 minutes

Outline

1. Ask participants to share some ways they might ground themselves or find comfort when they are feeling angry, scared, sad or other "big" feelings.
2. Share the book, "When Sophie Gets Angry, Really, Really Angry" by Molly Bang. Talk about how spending time in nature can be a powerful way to find comfort; medicine for the spirit.
3. Share your wellbeing pouch and ask students what sorts of things might be inside the pouch? Explain how different cultures around the world use medicine pouches for spiritual wellbeing. Some people sleep with them under their pillow. Some wear them around their neck. Some keep them in a special place for safekeeping. Sometimes actual medicinal herbs are carried in these pouches, but more often, items of importance and symbolism, unique totems for each individual, are carried in these pouches. Examples include:
 - a. Indigenous communities in the Midwest United States often carry sacred herbs including sage, cedar, red osier dogwood and tobacco, within their pouches.
 - b. Fragrant herbs that sooth or calm the mind (rosemary, sage, lavender, thyme...)
 - c. Special rocks or gems
 - d. Totems or small figurines that represent your unique characteristics or traits
 - e. Poems or special notes
 - f. Locks of hair from loved ones
 - g. Other small items that make you feel happy, strong and loved.
4. Handout materials for participants to make their own wellbeing pouches. Let them decorate them. If you bring fresh herbs, you can share about the medicinal properties of the herbs and their symbolism and allow participants to select herbs to add to their pouches.

5. Give participants a small piece of note paper and have them write down things that bring them joy:
 - a. Lyrics to a song they like
 - b. Five words that describe their strengths
 - c. A Haiku about their favorite nature space
 - d. A drawing of a tree they loveAdd the paper to their wellbeing pouch.
6. Take a walk outside and ask students to look for one small item they can add to their pouch to remember this day and place.
7. Gather everyone together and share how nature is medicine in many different ways. Food and healing herbs are eaten to make our bodies strong and healthy. But also sitting in nature and listening, smelling, looking at the land, plants, animals, and water around us; using our senses to pay attention to the nature around us, is powerful medicine for our mind and spirit.
8. Some people say sitting under a tree is medicine. What does that mean? Read the book, "Here and Now."
9. Encourage students to take their wellbeing pouches home and find more items to add to them; from their home and neighborhood or other special places they like to visit.
10. These special places are part of us. When we go to nature, we breathe in chemicals from the plants that are emitted into the forest air. The imagery of those places become engrained in our memories. The sounds and smells are branded into our memory. These places become part of us. Your wellbeing pouch can help you feel connected to these special places and to your special strengths.



Shinrin-yoku & Mindfulness in Nature

Description

In this activity, students explore the Japanese practice of Shinrin-yoku and learn how mindfulness practices amplify the healing power of nature.

Objectives

Youth will be able to:

- ❖ Describe the basics of Shinrin-yoku and the origins of the practice;
- ❖ Explain what it means to be mindful in nature;
- ❖ List ways practicing mindfulness in nature enhances wellbeing.

Materials

Notebooks
Pencils
Forest bathing outline

Grades

5 – 12

Prep Time

5 minutes (to scan site for potential safety hazards)

Activity Length

1 – 2 hours (depending on grade level)



Outline

1. Ask participants what it means to be mindful.
 - a. Mindfulness is a type of meditation in which you focus on being intensely aware of what you're sensing and feeling in the moment, without interpretation or judgment. Practicing mindfulness involves breathing methods, guided imagery, and other practices to relax the body and mind and help reduce stress.
 - b. Ask the group to think of different mindfulness practices they have heard of; meditation, yoga, tai chi, music therapy, forest bathing.
 - c. The simple practice of mindful breathing is very powerful and can be done anywhere; taking in a long, slow breath through your nose as you count to three, holding it for three, and releasing for out your mouth for three (repeat 3 times).
2. Forest bathing, known as Shinrin-yoku in Japan where the practice originated, is a mindfulness practice of using your senses to pay close attention to the details of nature that surround you. You can practice forest bathing in most settings, including indoors with a view out a window or near a houseplant.
3. Forest bathing has been proven to be a very powerful wellbeing practice. This is because when we take time to be present in nature, we return to our roots. Humans evolved as part of nature over hundreds of thousands of years. The elements of this planet; sun, wind, atmosphere, ionized energy moving outward from the earth, bacteria in the soil, chemicals plants emit into the air we breathe, visual patterns in nature, soothing sounds of the earth; all of these aspects make us earthlings – human beings. When we are disconnected from nature, we are separated from our source and we become unhealthy.

4. Shinrin-yoku is built on ancient mindfulness practices. It originated in Japan in the 1980s. During that time, the world was experiencing a technology boom. Computers, televisions and many electronics were being designed and built in Japan. Many Japanese workers were experiencing chronic stress and suicide rates were skyrocketing. The Japanese government intervened and began to identify prevention strategies. They discovered nature-based wellbeing practices had the biggest impact.

5. Forest bathing weaves elements of mindfulness with modern science to create a nature-based mindfulness experience that is proven to enhance wellbeing. Today in Japan, there are forest bathing preserves across the country. At these locations visitors check-in and get their blood pressure taken. They participate in their forest bathing walk and then re-check blood pressure as they leave. There is a lot of evidence showing this form of nature interaction is powerful.

6. As little as 10 minutes in nature can have positive effects on your body and mind. When you spend your time in nature practicing mindfulness activities such as forest bathing, you increase the wellbeing dosage. That is because slowing down and giving yourself permission to be present and engage all of your senses with the elements of nature surrounding you, allows your brain to rest while your body recalibrates with the rhythms of the natural world. Fly fishing, gardening, nature photography/nature art, hunting are other outdoor activities that have elements of forest bathing.

7. We are going to practice some forest bathing activities as a group. These are activities you can try at home and take with you wherever you go in life. Not every mindfulness practice is the right fit for everyone. Try different practices to find one that works best for you. Forest bathing is one tool you can add to your wellbeing toolkit.

8. Refer to the **forest bathing outline** in the appendix.

9. At the end of your walk, gather youth in a circle and have them each share one thing from the experience they enjoyed or found interesting. Encourage them to hold on to that memory and carry it with them, so when they feel the worry, fear, anger, sadness that comes and goes throughout life, they can retrieve that memory of this place and time together and find some peace in that memory.



Finding Nature Near You

Description

In this activity, students explore tools to find nature near where they live and plan a visit to a local nature space.

Objectives

Youth will be able to:

- ❖ Describe 5 local nature spaces in their community;
- ❖ List three tools they can use to explore nature locations in Minnesota;
- ❖ Use mapping tools and other on-line resources to plan a visit to a nearby nature area.

Materials

Poster paper

markers

Digital device (iPad, computer, etc.)

Access to the internet

Field trip planning worksheet

Grades

5 – 12

Prep Time

15 – 30 minutes

Activity Length

45 min - 1 hour



Outline

1. Ask participants to share about their favorite outdoor nature spaces. Make a list of locations on the whiteboard or on a sheet of paper.
2. Ask participants why they enjoy these spaces; what activities do they participate in when they visit?
3. Have students work together to sort the listed sites into groups. What do sites have in common? How are they similar or different? What do they notice about how these sites are grouped?
4. Our public lands are grouped into various categories.
 - a. Public lands are nature sites managed by government entities and paid for through taxpayer dollars. They are owned by the public; you and me.
 - b. One way our public lands are categorized is by agency;
 - i. Federal = US government
 - ii. State = local state government
 - iii. Regional = multi-state or county ownership
 - iv. County = county ownership
 - v. City
 - c. There are thousands of public lands in Minnesota alone.
5. Use a large poster paper to have students map out local parks and greenspaces in your community. This is merely a brainstorming activity to inventory the spaces youth are familiar with. You do not need to be exact on locations or inventory every park in town. Have each student add at least one nature space to the map.

6. Show students the [Recreation Compass](#) and have them use this tool to explore the various types of public lands in Minnesota. Have each student identify one public land from your region they want to learn more about. You can assign different types of public lands to students to ensure they cover a cross-section.

7. Have students explore other tools to find information on the sites they are researching:

a. [Google Earth](#)

b. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

- [State Parks](#)
- [State Forests](#)
- [Wildlife Management Areas](#)
- [Scientific and Natural Areas](#)

c. US Fish and Wildlife - [National Wildlife Refuges](#)

d. US Forest Service – [National Forests](#)

e. [National Parks](#)

f. Local parks resources

- Regional – sometimes counties collaborate to form regional parks districts, like the [Three Rivers Park District](#) in the Twin Cities.
- Counties with larger population densities will have a county parks department (ex: [Dakota County Parks](#), [Olmsted County Parks](#), etc.)
- Most cities have a city parks department – larger cities typically have an on-line map and tools to explore local city parks. For example, Rochester has more than 130 city parks and they have an [inter-active website](#) so you can explore the different parks and amenities. Similarly you can explore the [Winona Parks and Recreation website](#) to learn about local parks and outdoor recreation opportunities.

8. Have students plan a field trip to their local nature space. Have them use the **planning worksheet** in the Appendix and share their itinerary with the group. Consider the following details:

- Brief introduction and description of the site
- Directions to the site
- Days and hours of operation
- Entry fees
- Seasons
- Seasonal restrictions
- Potential safety hazards
- Outdoor recreation opportunities
- Rentals or equipment available
- Reviews
- Field trip plans (what you will do once you arrive)



9. If possible, organize an actual field trip to a local nature space. Perhaps incorporate a service project at this location.

Teaching Reciprocity

Description

In this activity, students will explore the concepts of reciprocity while planning and implementing a nature-based service project.

Objectives

Youth will be able to:

- ❖ Define reciprocity and explain the significance of acting in reciprocity with the earth;
- ❖ Share about a service project they planned and implemented at a local nature space.

Materials

The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein

Blue marbles

Blue Boat Home lyrics

Grades

5 - 12

Prep Time

5 – 30 minutes (depending if you want to assemble a list of potential nature-based service projects for your community)

Activity Length

30 – 60 minutes



Outline

1. Take students outside and read “The Giving Tree” with your group. Ask students how they feel about the way the tree was treated. Discuss how the boy might have shown more kindness to the tree.
2. Ask students what they think this story symbolizes. How do people often treat nature? Discuss what happens if we don’t treat nature with respect? Like the tree in the book, our forests, wildlife, oceans, soils, etc. suffer if we do not care for them.
3. Give each student a blue marble and ask them to hold it up to the sky and slowly turn it. What do they notice? What does their marble look like? If we were on the International Space Station looking at the earth, it would look like a tiny, blue marble. As a group, read the lyrics to **Blue Boat Home**, found in the Appendix.
4. Ask students if they have heard the word reciprocity. Does anyone know what this word means?
 - the practice of exchanging things with others for mutual benefitHow does one practice reciprocity with nature?
5. When we practice mindfulness in nature, that is a form of reciprocity. When we slow down and pay close attention to nature it is like closely observing artwork on display at a museum. Reciprocity can also be practiced in more physical ways, through service projects.
6. Have students think about ways they might coordinate a project to help nature in their community. Ideas might include:
 - Tree planting
 - Seed bombs to restore native wildflower habitat
 - Building bird houses/nest boxes
 - Litter clean-up
 - Invasive species removal
7. Work with your school or local parks department or nature center to identify a project that fits with your group.

Appendix

A - Resources

Websites

- Association of Nature and Forest Therapy Guides and Programs <https://www.anft.earth/>
- Project Get Outdoors, Inc. <https://www.mnprojectgo.org/>
- Children and Nature Network <https://www.childrenandnature.org/>
- Dakota Ethnobotany in the Carleton College Cowling Arboretum, https://d31kydh6n6r5j5.cloudfront.net/uploads/sites/594/2020/12/Final_2017_Ethnobotanical_Guide_Dakota.pdf
- Coloring Book of Dakota Plants and Landmaps of Mnisota by Marlena Myles <https://marlenamyl.es/2020/04/free-coloring-book-of-dakota-plants-landmaps-of-mnisota/>

Books

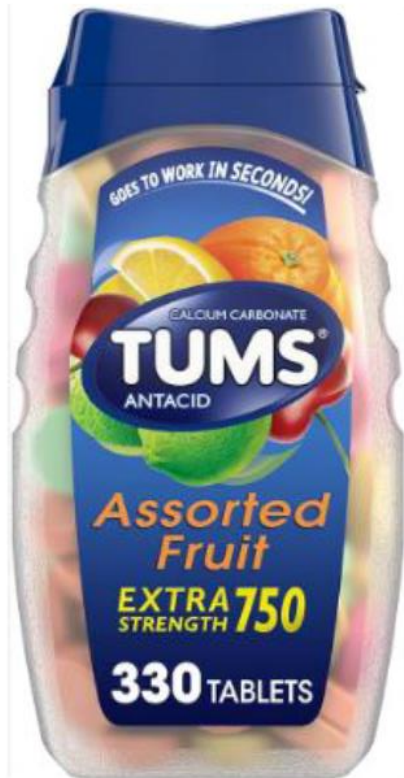
- Strength of the Earth: The Classic Guide to Ojibwe Uses of Plants by Frances Densmore
- Uses of Plants by the Indians of the Missouri Basin by Melvin R. Gilmore
- Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants by Robin Wall Kimmerer
- Here and Now by Julia Denos
- When Sophie Gets Angry, Really, Really Angry by Molly Bang
- The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein

B - Medicine Cards









FIRST AID ONLY

Neomycin Antibiotic Ointment

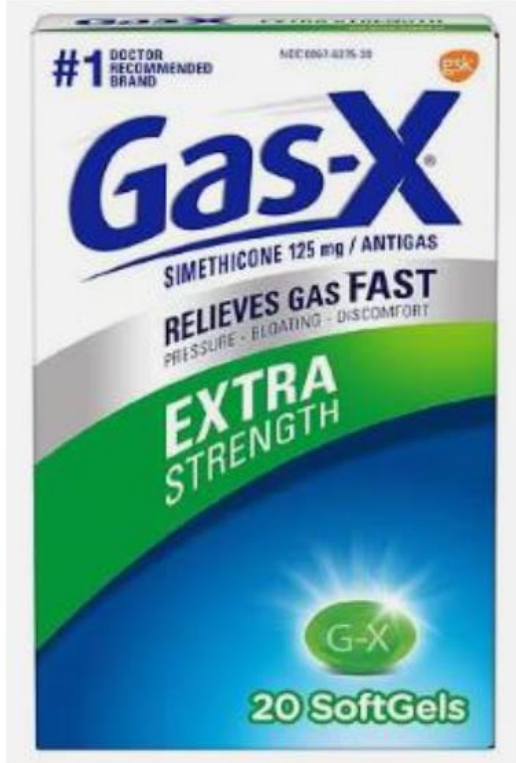
First aid ointment to help prevent infection

NET WT 0.9g (1/32 oz)

Drug Facts	
Active ingredient (in each gram)	Purpose
Neomycin Sulfate (3.5 mg Neomycin)	First aid...antibiotic
Use first aid to help prevent infection in minor ■ scrapes ■ cuts ■ burns	
Warnings For external use only ▶	







R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: Plantain

Use For: sting relief, itch relief, laxative

R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: Canada goldenrod

Use For: Antidiarrheal, fever reducer, cold & flu, sore throat, sedative

R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: Elderberry

Use For: Fever reducer, immune boosting, cold & flu

R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: Red osier dogwood

Use For: Dental care, fever reducer, expectorant

R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: Chamomile

Use For: Upset stomach, fever reducer, digestion

R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: White pine

Use For: Expectorant, sore throat

R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: Sage

Use For: Sedative, antiseptic, cold & flu

R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: St. John's wort

Use For: Sedative, burn relief

R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: Black walnut

Use For: Antifungal, laxative

R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: Willow

Use For: Pain reducer, fever reducer

R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: Dandelion

Use For: Diuretic

R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: Sphagnum moss

Use For: Antiseptic, antimicrobial, absorbent

R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: Hops

Use For: anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, diuretic, digestive, sedative, progestogenic, used for insomnia

R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: Common milkweed

Use For: laxative, antidote for dropsy, treatment for mastitis and venereal diseases, increase lactation

R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: Catnip

Use For: anxiety, fever reducer, insomnia, menstruation, colds

R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: Purple Coneflower

Use For: cold, bronchitis, upper respiratory infections

R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: Wild raspberry

Use For: astringent, upset stomach, cough suppressant

R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: Motherwort

Use For: antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, sedative, menopause, menstruation

R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: Heal All (Self Heal)

Use For: internal and external wounds, insect bites, poison ivy, headache relief

R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: Yarrow

Use For: enhance appetite, indigestion, heartburn, diuretic, menstrual cramps, inflammation, muscle spasms

R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: Wild bergamot

Use For: antibacterial, stress reducer, antifungal, diuretic, lower cholesterol, digestion, anti-inflammatory, pain reducer

R_X Nature's Pharmacy

Prescription: Wood nettle

Use For: Pain reducer, antihistamine/allergy reducer

D - Traditional Medicine Plants

Black Walnut

- Made into a tea and used as a laxative
- Chewed for toothaches
- Made paste from leaves and husk to treat ringworm, athlete's foot, hemorrhoids and as an insecticide

Canada Goldenrod

- Used to induce vomiting
- Sedative
- Antidiarrheal
- Fever reducer
- Used to treat the flu
- Used in baths for women in labor
- Used to treat soar throats and body pain

Chamomile*

- Flowers are rich in azulene, a volatile oil with anti-inflammatory and antifever gents, used to treat arthritis and other inflammatory conditions
- Excellent support for nervous and digestive system
- Used to calm colic and childhood digestive issues

Dandelion*

- Root used as liver tonic or "blood purifier"
- Stimulates the production of bile, which helps break down cholesterol and fat
- Used as a diuretic in cases of water retention and bladder or kidney problems
- Leaf is a good source of iron, calcium, vitamins and a rich assortment of trace minerals

Elderberry

- Flowers are diaphoretic; induce swelling thereby lower fevers
- Berries have immune-enhancing properties and often combined with echinacea (purple coneflower) in immune-stimulating remedies for colds
- Powerful antiviral properties used to treat viral infections including flu, herpes and shingles

Nettle

- Used to treat growing pains in young children
- Antihistamine properties make it an excellent remedy for allergies and hay fever
- Tonic for the reproductive system of men and women
- Frequently included in formulas for PMS and other menstrual difficulties, fertility issues and menopausal issues
- Seeds are used as both a preventative and curative for prostate issues

Plantain*

- Draws toxicity from the body; long history as remedy for blood poisoning
- Rich nutrients stimulate the liver and enrich or “cleanse” the blood
- Used in various liver problems including poor digestion and assimilation, hepatitis, jaundice, skin eruptions...
- A poultice is used for insect bites and stings, boils and other skin disorders and any deep-seated infection
- Has styptic and hemostatic properties, meaning it can help check bleeding
- Tea is used to staunch heavy menstrual bleeding
- Seeds are rich in mucilage and are mildly laxative; the main ingredient in Metamucil

Red osier dogwood

- Peeled twigs used as toothbrushes for their whitening effect on teeth
- A tea made from the bark has been used internally for coughs, colds, fevers, sinus congestion, liver problems, and postpartum bleeding
- Externally the bark tea has been used as a wash for rashes, ulcers, and dandruff
- Smoked in pipe mixture for sacred pipe ceremonies

Sage

- Aid in the digestion of rich, fatty meat
- Helps lower cholesterol levels and is a bitter tonic for the liver
- Sage tea can relieve stress
- Sage regulates fluids in the body and is used to reduce sweating (it's often an ingredient in deodorants)
- Cold and flu fighter
- Has astringent, antiseptic and relaxing action on mucous membranes and is a remedy for inflammation of the mouth, throat and tonsils
- Gargling sage mouthwash is one of the best remedies for laryngitis, tonsillitis and sore throat and can be used to treat sore gums and canker sores

Sphagnum moss

- A very strong absorbent that is also bactericidal, resistant to decay and safe to use against skin
- Used extensively for surgical dressings during the first World War
- Used for infants cradle linings, diapers, toilet paper and menstrual pads

St.. John's wort

- Effective for treating mild depression, anxiety, stress, tension, nerve damage and seasonal affective disorder
- Hypericin increases the metabolism of serotonin and melatonin and contributes to emotional stability
- Rich, red oil made from flowers is a remedy for trauma to the skin and is applied to bruises, sprains, burns and injuries of all kinds

White pine

- Needles exceed the amount of Vitamin C of lemons and oranges and make an excellent herbal tea
- Gum resin is chewed for sore throats
- Tea made from needles is an expectorant
- Heated resin was used to draw out splinters

Willow

- Tea made from bark is used to treat fever and pain and was used as a precursor to aspirin
- Willow bark has been used throughout the centuries in China and Europe, and continues to be used today for the treatment of pain (particularly low back pain and osteoarthritis), headache, and inflammatory conditions, such as bursitis and tendinitis
- Contains salicin, which is a chemical similar to aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid). In combination with the herb's powerful anti-inflammatory plant compounds (called flavonoids), salicin is thought to be responsible for the pain-relieving and anti-inflammatory effects of the herb

*indicates plants not native to North America

Nature-based Wellbeing Wheel

Benefits of exposure to nature:

- Heart
 - Lower cortisol levels
 - Lower blood pressure
 - Increased feelings of calm
- Ear
 - Natural sounds soothe the mind
- Stomach
 - Beneficial bacteria in soil enhance gut function
 - Outdoor activity enhances diet and sleep patterns
- Nose
 - Breathing in phytoncides boosts immune function
 - Aromatherapy from natural fragrances
 - Scent of soil after rain triggers feelings of wellbeing
- Bones
 - Vitamin D from sunshine is critical to bone health & immune function
 - Walking outdoors is one of the best therapies for arthritis
- Brain
 - Attention Restoration Theory = reduce rumination and anxiety
 - Decrease feelings of isolation and loneliness
 - Increase social interactions, creativity, problem solving, empathy...
 - Increase opportunities to experience awe and wonder
- Foot
 - Moving outdoors enhancing balance and agility
 - Grounding/earthing = Ionized energy of the earth reduces inflammation and pain
- Eyes
 - Fractal patterns calm the mind
 - Exposure to UV light spectrums enhances vision and signals brain to feel happy

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Print the graphic below on heavy cardstock.
2. Use a paperclip and paper fastener (split pin) to make a spinning wheel.
3. Have participants take turns spinning the wheel and discussing how being in nature impacts the different parts of the body.



F – Forest Bathing outline

- I. Gather youth in a circle outside. Have them spread out so they have space to stretch their arms out to their sides.
- II. Explain to students that you are going to invite them to try some different sensory activities. They can adapt each activity in any way that feels right to them. After each activity, we will gather back together in the sharing circle and go around to share what we are noticing. Each student can share however they wish; through words, music, dance, silence. They can pass if they want to pass.
- III. Invite students to take three deep breaths, breathing in for three seconds through their nose, holding for three seconds and then exhaling through their mouth for three seconds. As they take these slow breaths, encourage them to look around and notice where they are. They are in a safe place and nothing is going to hurt them.
- IV. If the ground is dry, you can invite students to sit down in the grass. Have them find a comfortable way to be for the next 10 minutes or so.
- V. **Pleasures of Presence**
 - a. Close your eyes for this activity to allow your other senses to awaken.
 - b. Pay attention to where you notice gravity in your body. Can you feel the earth pulling on you? Maybe in your ankles or knees. Maybe in your hips or shoulders. Maybe in your jaw or head. What does that sensation feel like? You are never, ever alone. The earth is always with you, holding on to you.
 - c. Place your hand on your heart. Do you feel your heartbeat or the warmth of your chest? I wonder what your heart longs for?
 - d. What does it feel like where your feet touch the ground? Imagine you have roots growing out of the bottoms of your feet. These roots twist and turn down into the ground below you. They branch out into smaller and smaller roots. Imagine you have tiny eyeballs on all of these roots that can see the world below your feet. What does it look like down there? All of the plants and trees surrounding us are connected to one another through their roots and the tiny, spiderweb-like roots or mycelium of the fungi in the soil. These plants share nutrients, moisture, chemical messages with one another through these roots. It's the Wood Wide Web. Imagine all of the tiny microorganisms living in the soil; billions of tiny little creatures. If we go down deep enough, we find rocks; ancient rocks that are hundreds of millions of years old. These rocks have been changing over eons, they are changing right now, and they will continue to change long after we are gone from this planet. Wow! There is an amazing universe underneath of us!
 - e. Think about your sense of touch. Do you notice places on your body where your skin comes into contact with your clothing? Maybe where your pants rub against your legs...or your shirt rubs against your arms or belly. Do you feel the breeze in your hair? Or the sunshine on your skin? What do these sensations feel like?
 - f. Think about your sense of hearing. What sounds do you notice? What is the furthest sound you hear? If you slowly turn your head from side to side, do you notice different sounds? What is the closest sound you hear? If you breathe just loud enough so only you can hear it, what does that sound like?
 - g. Think about your sense of smell. Do you notice any aromas in this space? If you slowly turn your head from side to side, to you detect different smells? Maybe you can smell your

shampoo or perfume. Maybe the smell of your home lingers on your clothing. Maybe you have your own unique smell that is always with you.

- h. Our sense of smell and our sense of taste are connected to each other. Do you notice any flavors in this space? If you sip air through your mouth like you are sipping through a straw, can you taste any flavors? Maybe something you ate or drank earlier is lingering in your mouth?
- i. In a moment, I am going to have you open your eyes, but before you do, I'd like you to consider that everything you see can also see you. When you are ready, you can slowly begin to open your eyes.
- j. What are you noticing?

VI. What's in Motion

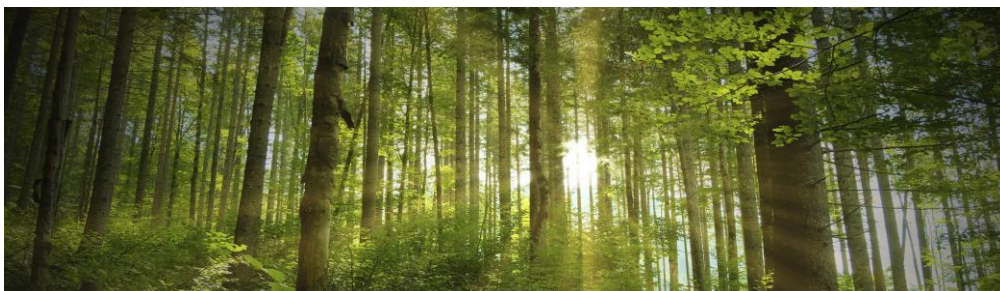
- a. For our next activity, we are going to move at the pace of a snail. I will set the pace by leading the group. Everyone can follow behind me. As we move, I invite you to pay attention to what is in motion around us.
- b. (Take 15 – 20 minutes, walking very slowly, one step for every breath) Gathering back together in the share circle, ask "What are you noticing?"

VII. Tiny Things

- a. Give each student a key chain hoop and invite them to explore the space in search of tiny things that fit within the hoop. What do they notice?

VIII. Tea Ceremony

- a. As you prepare the tea, explain to students how the tea ceremony is a symbolic ceremony. Teas are made from herbs of the forest. Drinking tea is like taking the forest home with us. But we don't need to drink tea made of herbs from the forest to take the forest home with us. Every time we go into nature, the places we visit become part of us. We breathe in the chemicals from the plants in these spaces. We take in the sunlight that has filtered through the forest canopy. Our brains remember the patterns, sounds and aromas of these places. They truly become a part of us.
- b. This tea today is to remind us that we are nature and nature is our home. This tea is made from _____, an herb that is know to provide _____ medicinal benefits.
- c. As I prepare two cups of tea, I ask you to think of something from this experience today that you are grateful for; something you can remember when you have a rough day and are feeling mad or scared or anxious or alone. I am going to raise this first cup in gratitude to the forest and as I pass it around the circle, I ask you to share one thing you are grateful for from today's experience. (once the cup has gone all around the circle) We will offer this cup to the forest (pour around one of the trees). Thank you tree, for all you give to us!
- d. This second cup of tea I offer in gratitude to each of you...for being present today, for being open to participating in this experience...and for sharing this special time together. Thank you. We will also offer this to the forest.
- e. This concludes our forest bathing today. May the forest be with you!



G - Field Trip Planning Worksheet

Name _____

Date _____

Name of site _____

Brief introduction and description of your site

Directions to your site

Days and hours of operation _____

Entry fees _____

Seasons of operation _____

Seasonal restrictions

Potential site hazards

Outdoor recreation opportunities

Rentals or equipment available

Google Reviews

Field trip plans (what will you do once you arrive?)

H – Blue Boat Home lyrics

BLUE BOAT HOME

Words by singer/songwriter Peter Mayer
Melody by Prichard, Hymn #207 in UU hymnal

<http://www.blueboat.net>

Though below me, I feel no motion
Standing on these mountains and plains
Far away from the rolling ocean
Still my dry land heart can say
I've been sailing all my life now
Never harbor or port have I known
The wide universe is the ocean I travel
And the earth is my blue boat home

Sun, my sail, and moon my rudder
As I ply the starry sea
Leaning over the edge in wonder
Casting questions into the deep
Drifting here with my ship's companions
All we kindred pilgrim souls
Making our way by the lights of the heavens
In our beautiful blue boat home

I give thanks to the waves upholding me
Hail the great winds urging me on
Greet the infinite sea before me
Sing the sky my sailor's song
I was born upon the fathoms
Never harbor or port have I known
The wide universe is the ocean I travel
And the earth is my blue boat home