

Nature Near Me – Plants



Objective: Plants are a vital part of every habitat, no matter where you live. Students will use plants they see around them every day to learn about plant parts and the basic needs of plants.

Outdoor U Video – watch some of our Student Naturalists learn about plant parts and search for plants in a scavenger hunt.

[Outdoor U Plants Video](#)

Outdoor U Activities – short and quick lessons from us that are designed to help students learn plant part and functions while noticing plants all around them.

[Plant Parts Jigsaw](#) – Students will become experts in one of the plant parts, then share their knowledge with their peers.

[Plant Survival Relay](#) – Through a running race, students will work together to help their plant find its basic needs for survival.

[Plant Scavenger Hunt](#) – A easy scavenger hunt for home or school that encourages students to look for all types of plant life.

Outdoor U Art Connections – activities from us that serve to strengthen the connection between art and science.

[Botany Buddies](#) – Students will design their own plant, including all the parts and how it finds its basic needs.

[Plant Parts – Art Extension](#) – Students will work together to create a larger-than-life plant for the classrooms, using what they learned with the plant part jigsaw activity.

[Nature Journaling](#) – An activity designed to introduce students to nature journaling while examining plants outdoors.

Other Suggested Activities – additional ideas for activities from other organizations to further your student's learning about plants.

Grow Plant, Grow from [The Jeffers Foundation](#)

Understand the importance of water, light, air, optimum temperature, and nutrients in plant survival.

Celery Experiment from [Teaching Tiny Tots](#)

Learn how a plant absorbs water through osmosis.

Make a Local Field Guide from [Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center](#)

Make observations of flowering plants in your area and create field guide entries.

Space to Grow Experiment from [Kids Gardening](#)

Students will see the impact of adequate space versus crowding on plant growth.

Websites – background information for teachers and fun activities for students to extend everyone’s learning.

Teachers

[What Makes Plants Grow?](#)

This resource provides information and classroom activities about what plants need to grow, photosynthesis, soil and composting, the water cycle, survival of the fittest/plant adaptations, and plant habitats.

[Hands-on Lessons and Activities about Plants](#)

Gain inspiration from these lessons and activities written for grades K-5. From learning about the growth of plants to plant adaptations, there is much to be explored in this list of resources!

[BrainPOP - Parts of a Plant Background Information](#)

Learn what the purpose(s) of external plant parts are and what they do to help the plant grow and survive with this resource.

[BrainPOP - Plant Life Cycle Background Information](#)

Learn about the different stages of the life cycle of a plant and how seeds move to a new place to grow with this resource.

Students

Parts of a Plant Video from [Generation Genius](#)

Watch this video to learn about the external parts of a plant and how they work together to help the plant grow and survive.

How a Bean Grows Video from [DK findout!](#)

Watch this video to see how beans grow and the different stages of their life cycle.

Biology of Plants from [Missouri Botanical Garden](#)

Explore this website to learn about the purpose of external plant parts, pollination, seed dispersal, plant adaptations, and more!

Plants from [DK findout!](#)

Explore this interactive website to learn all about what plants are and how they grow and survive.

Supermarket Botany Game from [Missouri Botanical Garden](#)

Which part of a plant is spinach? What about carrots and green peppers? Play this game to learn which common foods are roots, stems, leaves, seeds, flowers, and fruits from different plants.

Plant Games from [Seed Survivor](#)

This resource provides a variety of games for students in grades K-6 to play and learn about the different variables involved in nutrients that plants need from the soil watersheds, and photosynthesis. Recommended games: The Oxygenator, A-Maze-ing Underground, and the Survive with Light quiz.

Suggested Reading – a curated list of books we recommend reading with your students about plants.

Fiction

[Bloom: An Ode to Spring](#) by Deborah Diesen, illustrated by Mary Lundquist

Displaying a multi-racial young girl enjoying nature, this storybook follows the story of what happens after a long winter of waiting for planted bulbs to grow and the anticipation and excitement of the process.

[Call Me Tree/Lláname Árbol](#) by Maya Gonzalez—Spanish/English bilingual form

Explore the ways in which human beings are similar to trees, using senses and movement described in the bright pictures of diverse children in nature with poetic text.

[Fletcher and the Springtime Blossoms](#) by Julia Rawlinson, illustrated by Tiphonie Beeke

Follow the story of the adorable fox, Fletcher, who gets a little confused by a plant's sign that spring is here. but with the help of his friends, he sees the beauty of the season.

[Flower Garden](#) by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Kathryn Hewitt (featured in *Outdoor U's Storytime with a Naturalist*)

A young girl in a city apartment takes flowers on a journey to become a beautiful gift for her mother that brings life and brightness to her day.

[Lola Plants a Garden](#) by Ann McQuinn, illustrated by Rosalind Beadshaw

Celebrating Black joy and natural wonder, this story follows young Lola who takes on the creativity, hard work, community, and excitement involved in growing a garden of her very own.

[When a Tree Grows](#) by Cathy Ballou Mealey, illustrated by Kasia Nowowiejska

Animals of the forest end up on quite the adventure from the cause-and-effect chain that is created when an acorn grows into a tree. This fun story offers a glimmer of how interconnected and how important trees are in forest activity.

[Wild Berries](#) by Julie Flett

Honoring the Cree traditions by including vocabulary in Cree and written by a Cree-Métis author, share in the joy of the natural wonders that can be found through wandering on a search for tasty berries.

Realistic Fiction

[Because of an Acorn](#) by Lola Schaefer and Adam Schaefer, illustrated by Frann Preston-Gannon

Bright and vivid art complements a simple story demonstrating the interconnectedness of resources that are at play because of the growth of a simple little acorn. Resource information regarding trees, ecosystems, and more are provided in the final pages.

[Flowers are Calling](#) by Rita Gray, illustrated by Kenard Pak

Learn about the many types of flowers, characteristics and identifying features of flowers from across the world, and the many animals and bugs that rely on flowers for survival.

[Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt](#) by Kate Messner, illustrated by Christopher Silas Neal

Learn about signs of plant growth from both the human view (above ground) and animal perspective (below the ground) as well as the animals that are found when plants are growing.

[Plant a Pocket of Prairie](#) by Phyllis Root, illustrated by Betsy Bowen

Beautiful pictures and exciting text make this an excellent education storytime book! Learn about the unique characteristics of prairie plants and the relationships that are vital to prairie survival.

[Planting a Rainbow/Cómo plantar un arco iris](#) by Lois Ehlert—available in Spanish

A great book for beginning readers, this storybook focuses on the many colors that can be found among the plants and the joy they bring as a rainbow of their own.

[What Do Roots Do?](#) by Kathleen Kudlinski, illustrated by David Schuppert

Written in a comprehensible and inquiry-based story format, learn the science of why plants have roots and the important roles they play.

Nonfiction

[I Ate Sunshine for Breakfast](#) by Michael Holland

Packed full of activities, bright pictures, and scientific information, this book serves as an excellent resource for educators as well as a fun book for students to explore. Learn about what plants need to survive, how plants are used for many purposes, and more!

[The Magic and Mystery of Trees](#) by Jen Green, illustrated by Claire McElfatrick

All the basics of trees are covered in this vivid resource book made especially for educators and eager learners alike. Bright pictures, useful graphics, and large pages full of information allow readers to learn about the parts of a tree and their functions, ecosystems, fun facts, and what people can do to help these special organisms.

[Ten Plants that Changed Minnesota](#) by Mary Hockenberry Meyer and Susan Davis Price

Locally-focused, this book provides plenty of fun facts for students to embrace, ethnobotany (the relationships between people and plants), local history, and more—all tied to the amazing organisms we call “plants.”

[Trees and Shrubs](#) by George A. Petrides

This field guide provides information on tree and shrub identification, categorization, and drawings for detailed descriptions of countless plants and is a great reference for distinguishing these plants.

[Wildflowers of Minnesota Field Guide](#) by Stan Tekiela

A must-have for outdoor plant exploration with students, this field guide includes beautiful pictures on each page of different flowers, is conveniently organized by flower color for easy navigation, and provides basic useful information for getting to know the plants around you.