

Recognising and preserving useful local plants

Subject(s) Basic Science, Social Science, English

Year(s) 9–10

Learning intention

Students gain an awareness of the purpose and use of certain local plants which have traditional and cultural importance and understand how these plants are deeply connected with people's wellbeing, both in present and past times.

Curriculum links

Science

Strand: S9.1 Living Things and the Environment

Sub-strand: S9.1.1 Structure and Life processes

Learning Outcome(s)

- S9.1.1.2 Account for the structure and function of plants parts that relate to life processes and demonstrate these processes using controlled experiments.

Social Science

Strand: SS9.3 Place and Environment

Sub-strand:

SS9.3.1 Mapping

Learning Outcome(s)

- SS9.3.1.2 Explore and justify the importance of conserving our fragile ecological environment and our National heritage to promote environmental sustainability.

English

Strand:

EN9.1 Listening and Speaking

EN 10:1 Listening and Speaking

EN 10:3 Writing and Shaping

Sub-strands:

EN 9.1.1 Text types: media, everyday communication, literary texts

EN 10.1.1 Text Types: media, everyday communication, literary texts

EN 10.3.4 Language Learning processes and Strategies

Learning Outcome(s)

- EN9.1.1.2 Demonstrate concepts, skills and values respective to listening and speaking skills and relate it to a range of everyday conversation.
- 10.1.1.2 Use oral language accurately to communicate ideas and experiences appropriate to various situations and contexts.
- 10.3.4.1 Use a variety of writing strategies to develop a variety of writings.

Teaching activity

Materials required

- 'Useful local plants' handout – print 1 per group of 4

Activity 1: Class discussion about useful local plants

1. **Conduct** a class discussion about useful local plants, using the following prompts:
 - *There are many useful local plants of traditional and cultural importance.*
 - *These local plants have had deep connections to people's health and wellbeing for many generations and are still relevant in the lives of people today.*
 - *The knowledge and skills related to the various uses of these useful local plants have been passed down through generations from our ancestors who learned to use these plants for different purposes to sustain their survival.*
 - *The types of useful local plants and their uses may vary among the different island communities and ethnic groups.*
 - *The knowledge, skills and practices involved in the use of the various plants are slowly disappearing so it is important to value and revive them to preserve identity and cultural heritage.*
 - *The term 'useful local plants' refers to any local plants people used for people's sustenance.*
2. **Focus** the discussion on plants that have traditional or cultural significance (e.g. yams, taro, corn).
3. **List** on the board the following 10 categories:
 - *Food, Medicine, Cooking, Construction/Building, Tools, Artifacts and Crafts, Ornaments, Clothing, Weapons, Others*
4. **Ask** students to name different local plants that they know and to identify the plants' purposes, using the categories listed on the board. Note that some plants may fit into various categories.

Activity 2: Group work with plant collection and discussion

1. **Inform** students that the next activity will focus on useful local plants that fit into the categories of foods or medicines.
2. **Instruct** students to work in groups of four, with each group assigned a particular area of the school to explore.
3. While walking around the school compound, students **identify** and **collect** four known useful local plants that can be used either as food or medicine.
4. Students can either **collect** real specimens of the plants or **take photos** of the different plants to bring back to class.
5. In their groups, students **discuss** the importance of the collected plants and **record** their observations and findings using the 'Useful local plants' handout.
6. In their groups, students **present** their findings to the whole class.

Task(s)

Year 9 task

Select two of the plants identified by your group and write a short paragraph on each plant, outlining the importance of preserving the plants.

Year 10 task

1. Interview a person in the community who uses one particular local plant as food or medicine for their sustenance or wellbeing. Possible interview questions include:
 - *What is the name of the plant and what is its significance?*

- *How is it used and or applied?*
 - *Have there been any changes in the use or application of this plant over the years?*
 - *How has the plant been adapted to suit a changing purpose?*
 - *Are there risks involved in the continuous use or disuse of the plant? What are these risks and how can they be overcome?*
 - *Why is it important to preserve this plant's traditional and cultural knowledge and use?*
2. Use the interview responses to write a brief discussion piece on the social, economic and environmental benefits and, if relevant, the risks, of preserving this local plant.

Useful local plants

Group members:

1 Plant name (English and local versions):

Significance:

Uses and applications:

2 Plant name (English and local versions):

Significance:

Uses and applications:

3 Plant name (English and local versions):

Significance:

Uses and applications:

4 Plant name (English and local versions):

Significance:

Uses and applications: