Lesson Title | Unit
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Foraging | Food, Food History

Grade Level(s) | Common Core Standard(s)
---|---
6 | 6.T2.3

Objectives | Essential Questions
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To experience and understand the challenges and rewards of gathering food from the environment | What are the challenges of foraging?  
What are the benefits of foraging for food?  
What was life like for hunter-gatherer societies?

Duration | Materials Needed
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45-50 minutes | Wild edibles guide (see link)  
Clipboards  
Baskets/cups for collecting

Background Information | Setup Required
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The origins of human civilization  
The Paleolithic/Neolithic period | Find sites of multiple wild edibles and create a handout with pictures and information, so students can follow along and write notes on each edible.

Procedure

**Introduction (5-10 minutes)**
- Gauge student’s understanding of the concept of nomadism or forage-dependent living
  - How did humans survive during the Paleolithic period? They hunted for animals, gathered plants and fruits, etc. Obtaining food was the focus of daily life.
  - Today we are going to place ourselves back in this hunter-gatherer time, as gatherers, and we will try our hands at “foraging” today.
    - Has anyone ever heard the words, “native plant,” “wild edibles” or “foraging”? What does it mean? What’s an example of a food that you might forage around our area?
  - We are going to go on a foraging walk today and we will taste different wild edibles:
    - We will be ignoring anything non-native to our region
    - We will be relying on the plant knowledge of your mentor, me, as new gatherers would be before tasting and collecting any plants
    - We will write tasting notes and notes about finding the plant (is it difficult to identify? It is difficult to harvest an abundance of it?)
    - Do not eat anything unless you have my permission! We need to be sure that it is one of our wild edibles and safe to taste

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Lesson By: Island Grown Schools
Activity (25-35 minutes)
- Walk with the group to the first wild edible site, asking them to name any plant they’re familiar with on the way
  - Here is our first wild edible - identify the plant
  - Demonstrate how to harvest responsibly
  - Model tasting a small amount of the plant, and give specific instructions on how and where to spit out the sample if they don’t like it
  - Share and write down notes on taste, difficulty to identify, and difficulty to harvest
  - Move on to our next wild edible - as you go along, ask students to recognize the wild edibles they’ve already tasted along the way (they’ll notice that much of what’s around them is edible!)

Wrap up (5 minutes)
- Congrats on gathering for the last 25-35 minutes, let’s hear some feedback on the experience:
  - Q - What would have been some of the benefits of foraging for food?
  - Q - What are some of the challenges of foraging for food?
  - Q - When we consider the environmental impact of humans, what level of impact would a hunter-gatherer society have had?
  - Q - What level of impact do we have today because of how we get our food?
  - Q - Do you wish we still lived in a time when you could gather or hunt all day? You can still practice foraging and hunting with a knowledgeable mentor!

Extensions and Variations
See foraging worksheet example for available wild edibles in October on Martha’s Vineyard, MA
Picking autumn olive berries

Tasting red clover, plantain, and dandelion leaves - and writing notes