

GYC201 MurdochBIO 111

Know Your Plants

Greening Your Curriculum 201

Scott Murdoch Biology 111

This assignment expands upon our students Ecoliteracy by introducing them to various plants growing in the area around MVCC. The activity calls for students collect and examine various leaves, flowers, fruits from plants found on campus or in the surrounding forest preserve. Using resources such as the library and internet the students are required to identify the type of plants and bring this information to class. The students then work in small (lab) groups to discuss and hypothesize on various aspects of these plants and how these may be adaptations for the plants survival or reproduction. Features of interest include the shape, texture, color (particularly interesting during Fall semester), type, size, and other unique features.

By getting to know a few individual plants, the students can become ecoliterate with some plants that are all around them, and they may see every day. This activity in critical observation reveals details that they may overlook at first glance and noticing subtle phenomena. By hypothesizing about these characteristics, they use critical thinking skills to make biological connections between the plant parts and their ultimate purpose revealing the wonder of the Biology.

This activity can be used to address a number of objectives in Biology. It can be incorporated in teaching evolution and adaptation and mutation, it can also be used during the topic of photosynthesis, or in teaching the scientific method. I plan to use this assignment next semester.

The students assessment is based on:

1. collecting 10 plant parts from different plants
2. creative and critical thinking in their ideas about these parts

Know Your Plants Activity

1. Go outside and collect 5 plant parts from different plants in your area. You may use MVCC campus, local forest preserves, or your own backyard. Please be considerate and do not harm the plant.

Plants may include:

Trees
Grasses
Shrubs
Per

Parts may include:

Leaves
Flowers
Fruits
Nuts
Twigs
Buds
Seeds

2. Critically examine your parts and use resources such as books, the library, or the internet to identify these plants (or at least come close). Write the name of the plant and the plant part on a notecard and bring to class.

3. Bring your plant parts and notecards to class and work in lab groups to critically observe your parts and hypothesize as to the function of the various features of the part. Consider size, shape, color, smell, structure, texture, and any other features you notice. Be thoughtful and creative. Fill out the cards with the information below:

Plants Name

Part Found

Feature Identified

Possible Functions/Notes