

# “Wildflower Field Guide Scavenger Hunt” lesson plan

Duration: 60 minutes

## Objectives:

- Students will learn how to use a field guide
- Students will be introduced to different native wildflower species found in the Ottawa area
- Students will understand how the different parts of a plant can be used to identify the species of wildflower

## Background:

Field guides are a useful tool to identify species while out in nature. The included field guides for this lesson include pictures or illustrations of the plant, and describe common characteristics for each specific plant, such as average height, colour of petals, and number and shape of leaves. This activity will help students use a field guide to identify common wildflower species found in the Ottawa area.

## Materials:

- One *Quick Reference to Wildflowers of Ontario and Eastern Canada* by Lone Pine Publishing per student
- Flashcards: pictures of different wildflowers; 1 set per student
- Flashcards: descriptions of different wildflowers; 1 set per student
- One “Answer Table” per student (see **Table One** below)

## Procedure:

1. Ask students if they have ever seen something they don't know the name of in nature – is there a bird or tree that they see on their way to school but they don't know its name? Being able to correctly name a plant or animal is important for a number of reasons, the first being that we want to accurately describe something we see to a friend or family member! What are some techniques students could use to find out the name of the plant or animal? Likely the internet or an App will be the first reply, but encourage students to think about something that anyone could take outside with them without needing the internet or a phone!
2. Hold up a copy of the *Quick Reference to Wildflowers of Ontario and Eastern Canada* field guide. Explain how many people have worked hard to try and find every different type of animal and plant in our area, and they have described some of them in this field guide. Field guides can have lots of different information in them, but they almost always have a picture or drawing of the plant or animal, and then some information on how to identify them. For the *Quick Reference to Wildflowers of Ontario and Eastern Canada*, colour, height, leaves, flowers, and fruit are described for each wildflower.

3. Hand out a set of wildflower cards and one *Quick Reference to Wildflowers of Ontario and Eastern Canada* to each student. Have students try to identify each of the six wildflowers in **Table One**.
  - a. Photos: Common Milkweed (#1), Black-Eyed Susan (#2), Common Fireweed (#3), White Water Lily (#4), White Trillium (#5), Yellow Pond Lily (#6)
4. Discuss which might be harder – trying to identify a plant based on its picture, or based on its characteristics? Why? Why might it be important to include all information in a field guide? If we have a wildflower blooming in front of us, a photo or illustration may be easiest to use to identify the plant. Depending on the time of year, no flower may be present so a list of characteristics may be more useful, like the plant's height, number of leaves present, or type of fruit.
5. Ask students to share what strategies they used to narrow down which plant their picture was of.
6. Have students draw and name their favourite wildflower (handout on page 4), and return all field guides and papers back to you at the end of this lesson.