

Weed Did It!



Goals

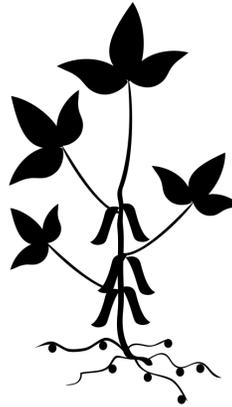
Students will learn to identify at least five different types of weeds in the garden and properly clear the garden of weeds.

Objectives

Students will label and draw five different weeds in their journals and compete in a weed pulling competition.

Materials

- Hoes
- Cultivators
- Buckets for collecting weeds
- Field guides to weed types
- Journals



Time: 40 minutes

Advanced Preparation

This activity can be followed by the *Soil Scavenger Hunt* activity so the soil is broken up and turned in preparation for weeding.

Background Information

The danger of over weeding is one of the reasons for adopting an ecological gardening approach, free of chemical pesticides, herbicides, fungicides and fertilizers, which in the long run can do more harm than good. Check out these guides to help you identify weeds in the garden:

Common Weeds of the United States by Dover Publications

Weeds by Western Publishing Company

Introduction (10 min)

Select a few students to play the role of the vegetables. You may assign vegetable roles to students or let them pick the vegetable they would like to represent (tomatoes, corn, beans, etc.). Space the students about 2' apart and let them play their role as a vegetable. The "vegetables" should stretch toward the sunlight, or perhaps pretend they are growing by stretching out. Then select the same number of students to play the role of weeds. Place the weeds in between the vegetables and now have the weeds and vegetables play their plant roles, reaching for the sunlight and growing. Ask the vegetables to describe how their experience was different the second time. If more students are available, you may choose to include them all by continuing the play with more weeds. Continue the discussion and ask the students how this relates to the vegetables in the garden and the weeds around them.

Activity Steps (25 min)

1. Gather the students around a garden bed full of weeds (this may be an unplanted plot, or a plot with many weeds and existing vegetables). Encourage the children to identify the different plants that grow in and around your garden to determine which ones you want to keep and which ones to eradicate. Also take note of other organisms in the garden. In your haste to weed out undesirable plants, you may be taking away a creature's home, or pulling out a desirable nitrogen-fixing plant, like clover.
2. Use a weed guide to identify at least five weeds in the garden. Have students draw and name the five varieties of weeds in their journals. You may also want them to include other information about the weed found in the weed guide, such as if the weed is edible, how to properly eradicate it, etc. Pull an example of each weed from the garden and allow students to see the root systems. Note the differences and similarities and have students draw them.
3. Demonstrate for the students the proper method for pulling/prying weeds from the garden. Most weeds need the entire root system removed for complete eradication.
4. As you monitor, have students pull or pry weeds for proper practice. Remind students that they should always ask if they are uncertain if a plant is a weed before pulling it.
5. Have a weed pulling competition with the students and see who can pull up the most weeds in a given amount of time. Who can find the longest root? Who can find the most variety of weeds? You may find it motivating to partner students for this competition, and small garden related prizes might also be fun.

Conclusion (5 min)

Have students respond to the following prompt in their journals: *When weeding the garden I should _____ because _____.*

Notes
