



GO FORAGE! (A botanical version of Steal the Bacon)

Divide a group of children into two teams. Have them count off, so that each child has a number. Arrange the teams in two rows with a pile of edible plants that they have already learned in the center. Be sure there is only one sample of each species. Announce the name of the plant that is the object, call out a number, and shout "Go Forage!" The two children with that number race to the pile to find the plant. Whoever gets the plant first wins a point for his or her team. Selecting the wrong plant loses a point. Vary the game by hunting for plant qualities—a simple toothed leaf, a bulb, or an inedible plant.

SCAVENGER HUNT

Children love scavenger hunts. Make a list of the plants they've learned, and set them loose. Have them work individually or in teams. You don't have to restrict the hunt to specific plants. You may add a seed, taproot, aromatic plant, thorny plant, bulb, or any medicinal or poisonous plant to the list. You can also include minerals, insects, or other natural or man-made objects.

MIX AND MATCH

You can create a multitude of variations matching twigs, leaves, flowers, or mushrooms. Put several leaves from five different plants or trees in a grab-bag. Each child grabs one leaf, and tries to find another child with the same leaf. You can make it competitive by making the first pair of children to make a match the winners. Or you can time the group and see how long it takes for everyone to make a match. Then children can describe the characteristics of their leaves, or name the species that the leaf came from. Vary the activity by matching twigs, flowers, mushrooms, or other objects.

WHAT KIND OF PLANT AM I?

One child is the plant. The other children ask questions to be answered by "yes" or "no." After a child asks a question, he or she may guess the plant's name. The child who guesses correctly then takes a turn becoming a new plant. You may want to provide plant identification hints beforehand. Suggest questions such as whether it's a tree, shrub, or vine, woody or non-woody, edible, or poisonous. Suggest questions about leaf type and shape, or root type or type of fruit. You can make the game easier by providing a list of possible plant names.

[These games were created and shared online by Wildman Steve Brill at www.wildmanstevebrill.com.]