Creation of species tags and herbarium

GENERAL INFORMATION

Target Audience	Ages 11 to 18
Activity Duration	Several days
Recommended Season	Any

OBJECTIVE

- Learn how to search for and synthesize information from reliable sources.
- Become familiar with the local environment.
- Contribute to the improvement of the surroundings.

SUMMARY

Students will work in groups to research plant species found in their environment. They will synthesize the information by creating informative signs that will be placed next to the studied plant species. At the same time, they will create a herbarium with the plant specimens they find.

MATERIALS

- Sources of information: books, websites, mobile apps, or professionals in the field.
- Computer
- Newspaper
- Cardstock (optional)
- Pens, markers, etc.
- Cameras/phones
- Plant press (optional)
- Stakes

ACTIVITY JUSTIFICATION

Often, we don't notice the nature around us—in the schoolyard, the neighborhood park, or the nearest forest—even though we spend part of our time in those settings. This activity allows students to stop and observe the plants surrounding them daily, research to understand them better, and ultimately share their findings with the community by creating an informative sign for each plant species. In this way, others can also learn more about the plants in their environment. Not only will

students learn independently, but they will also experience the satisfaction of leaving a small legacy through their informational signs.

STEPS TO FOLLOW

1) **Field Trip**: Visit a park, forest, or garden where the target plant species can be found.

2) **Photograph** the specimens to be identified. With the help of experts and field guides, the species will be identified. A few leaves, fruits, and/or flowers will be collected from the specimens.

3) **Divide the class** into working groups. Each group will be responsible for researching one or two plant species, depending on the number of participants and species.

4) **In the classroom**, conduct more detailed research on each species. The collected plant parts can be used to assist with identification.

5) **Press the collected plant organs** (leaves, fruits, and/or flowers) to create a herbarium. Place them between two sheets of newspaper and apply weight (such as books). Alternatively, a small homemade plant press can be used. The newspaper should be changed daily until the plant material is fully dried.

6) **Synthesize the gathered information** into a fact sheet for each species, including:
    - Common name
    - Scientific name
    - Physical description
    - Distribution
    - Traditional uses
    - Interesting facts
    - Photographs, drawings, etc.

7) **Create a sign** (digitally or by hand) for each plant species using this information.

8) **Post the signs** in the field:
    - **Digital signs**: Print and laminate them. Attach each sign to a stake with a staple.
    - **Handmade signs**: Laminate and staple them to a stake in the same way.

9) **Finish the herbarium**:
    - Attach the dried plant parts to folded A3 cardstock using a small piece of tape.
    - Write the common and scientific name, collection date, and location on each sheet.
    - Bind all sheets together to create a small book that will serve as the class herbarium.