

PLANTS & WILDFLOWERS



INTRODUCTION

From towering trees to the teeniest wildflower, you find plants everywhere on the Gunflint Trail. Many people visit the Gunflint Trail because they feel calmer and happier when they are surrounded by trees, wildflowers, ferns, and other plants.

If you think plants don't do much, consider this: When we breathe in, we breathe in oxygen. When we breathe out, we exhale carbon dioxide. The leaves of plants around us then "breathe" in carbon dioxide and "breathe" out oxygen that we in turn breathe in.

Plants provide us with many things in addition to oxygen to breathe. They give us materials to make homes, furniture and clothing. They provide food for humans and other animals to eat. They are often beautiful and very pleasing to look at. We play with plants when we climb trees or make a wish on a dandelion or daisy. Scientists even believe that our brains work better when we're near plants.

WHAT'S IN THE PLANTS & WILDFLOWERS ACTIVITY BIN:

- Minnesota Trees and Wildflowers Guide
- 2 Magnifying Glasses
- Colored pencils, markers, and crayons
- Scratch paper
- 2 Clipboards
- Index cards

NOTES FOR PLANTS & WILDFLOWERS ACTIVITIES:

- Length of activity varies – depends on how long of a hike you take!
- For ease of use, you may use the backpacks to bring the items you need for the "Make A Postcard" activity with you on the Chik-Wauk nature trails.
- Please do not remove this bin from Chik-Wauk grounds
- If you are using a bin outside on Chik-Wauk grounds, check out bin at museum front desk.
- Please don't pick wildflowers, leaves, pine cones, or any other plant while doing these activities.



ACTIVITY

Take a minute to observe the plants around you. What plants do you see that you want to take a picture of? Maybe you want a big sweeping picture of the trees or perhaps you prefer a close-up of the inside of a flower.

In your group, have one person volunteer to be the “photographer.” Everyone else is a “camera.”

The photographer tells the cameras close their eyes. The photographer leads the cameras to a scene the photographer wants to take a picture of. The photographer gently tugs on the cameras’ ears so the cameras open their eyes to see the scene. After a few seconds, the photographer snaps the picture by pulling on the cameras’ ears. The cameras close their eyes and wait to take another picture.

Be sure to take turns being the photographer.

Did people in your group have different ideas of what plants they thought were beautiful and worth taking a picture of? Were there lots of different plants in your pictures or did you just take pictures of a couple favorite plants?

NORTH WOODS PLANTS

*Many different kinds of plants grow on the Gunflint Trail.
You probably took “pictures” of several
of these plants in the last activity.*

TREES:

A tall plant with a trunk and branches. *Deciduous trees* lose their leaves during autumn, while the needles of *conifers* stay green year-round.



FERNS:

A leafy, seedless, flowerless plant that grows in shady, moist areas. A fern grows in a shape known as a frond.



SHRUBS:

A woody plant with leaves and branches that often resembles a bush. Although often shorter than trees, shrubs can be as tall as 13 feet.



MOSS:

A low growing plant that often carpets the forest floor.



WILDFLOWERS:

Any flowering plant, regardless of shape or size, that has not been purposefully planted by a human.



LICHEN:

A prickly looking plant commonly found growing on rocks.



AQUATIC PLANTS:

Different looking plants of all sorts of sizes grow in water. These include bulrushes (which look like reeds), cattails, and water lilies.



ACTIVITY

Go on a plant scavenger hunt.

Take a walk on the Chik-Wauk hiking trails and see if you can find an example of each of the plants listed on the other side of this sheet. Then see if you can find these plants:

- A plant you could eat
- A plant that smells good
- A plant that's taller than you
- A white flower
- A curly leaf
- A prickly plant
- A smooth plant
- A plant that feels soft
- A seed
- A pine cone

PARTS OF A PLANT

A single plant has many different parts. Here's a basic look at a wildflower's anatomy:

ROOTS

The underground portion of a plant. Roots hold plants in place and soak up moisture and nutrients for the plant from soil.

STEM

Attached to the plants' roots, the stem grows above ground and supports leaves and flowers. Nutrients and moisture move up through the stem to the leaves and flowers.

LEAVES

Leaves soak up sunlight and use a process called photosynthesis to turn sunshine into energy that helps the plant grow.

BUD

Undeveloped shoots from the stem that grow into leaves or flowers.

FULL FLOWER

Usually the most noticeable and fragrant part of a plant, flowers attract bees and other insects who pollinate the flower. Flowers must be pollinated for the plants to produce fruit and seeds.

PETALS

Often brightly colored, these flower parts help attract insects. A plant's "Corolla" refers to all the petals of a single flower.

SEPAL, STAMENS, ANTHEAS, STIGMAS and PISTILS

Reproductive parts of a flower that work together to create flower seeds by producing and receiving pollen.

FRUIT/SEED

Once pollinated, plants produce fruit and/or seeds. The seed contains all the energy the plant needs to grow underground until the first plant shoot pokes up through the soil and the plant can start performing photosynthesis.

ACTIVITY

Pull out the wildflower guide and look for one of these common flowers.

FALSE LILY OF THE VALLEY – early season wildflower

DOGBANE – mid-season wildflower

GOLDENROD – late season wildflower

When you find the wildflower, take out the magnifying glass and look at the flower through the magnifying glass. Can you tell how many petals each flower has? What other interesting things do you notice about the flower? How many different parts of the flower do you see? Do you see any insects on the flower or plant?

Check with an adult in your group to make sure you're not allergic to this plant. Now take a good sniff of the flower. What does it smell like? If you were a bee or other insect, would you want to come pollinate this plant?

ACTIVITY

Make a Postcard

Take a short hike on the Chik-Wauk grounds, paying careful attention to all the plants you see. When you find a plant you really like, take an index card out of the pack and use the colored pencils and markers to draw the plant on the postcard's front side. When you finish your drawing, write an explanation of why you like this plant so much on the back of the postcard on the left-hand side. If you prefer, write about some of the other things you've been doing and seeing during the vacation instead. Now you can mail this postcard to someone who didn't come on this trip with you to show them what you've been doing and learning on the Gunflint Trail. You could also keep the postcard to help you remember the trip.

WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED USING THIS ACTIVITY PACK!

Please put everything you pulled out back into the bin and place the bin back where you found it so it's ready for next person. Thank you!