

3rd grade Geography Unit Garden Lesson

Objective: Students will reinforce their understanding of geography by going on a plant scavenger hunt. They will learn the terms native vs. non-native plants, then using primary and secondary directions (compass rose) they will locate specific plants native to each of the 7 continents studied in their geography unit.

40-45 min lesson

Materials: clipboards, pencils, 'hunt' handouts, popsicle sticks with plant names, (optional: 1 compass per group; blow-up globe; "rare" seed to take home as reward)

*break students into groups of 3 for scavenger hunt

5 min Intro: Did you know plants in the school garden come from all over the world? Who remembers where tomatoes originally come from? Where a plant originally evolved or came from is where it is **native** to. A **non-native** plant is a plant growing somewhere it didn't come from and the school garden is full of both native and non-native plants. (Do bananas naturally grow here? No!) So how do you think non-native plants got here? People brought them...

10-15 min Overview: Walk length of garden to point out plants from all 7 continents (prompt students: N. America, S. America, Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, Antarctica). While touring garden speak briefly about early plant 'hunters' or explorers who braved very real dangers to locate and bring back rare and exotic plant species. These early explorers had to be expert navigators who knew how to find their way in the world using maps and compasses, also using landforms like mountains, valleys, rivers, lakes, etc. to help them navigate. Prompt students: what are landforms near our school that help us know where North is? (Bull Hill, Hudson River, Storm King & Crow's Nest Mountains, James Pond, etc.)

25-30 min: Scavenger Hunt!

At other end of garden students break into groups, each group gets a Scavenger Hunt list, a compass, and must find 13 plants (popsicle sticks) representing all the continents. They may use landforms, compass, and clues to locate the plants. When done, they meet at picnic tables to show their teacher all 13 collected "plants."

(optional: if all 13 plants are successfully found each group gets a pack of "rare" seeds to take home – early plant explorers often collected seeds instead of plants because journeys back by sea could take months and not all plants were able to survive the journey!)

Geography Scavenger Hunt: Master Sheet

1. From... N. America Pokeweed: Head west for 15 steps and look for plant with balloon balls in front of brick wall.
2. Africa Balloon Milkweed: Head South for 10 steps and look for a purple leaved plant from Europe that can be eaten cooked or raw in salads.
3. Europe Cabbage: head N, NW for 10 steps and look for a plant used to make cloth.
4. Australia & Africa Cotton: Head SW 10-15 steps and look for flower used to dye yellow.
5. Marigold S. America: Head W, NW 15-20 steps and look for a fuzzy plant named after an animal.
6. Lamb's Ear Europe/Asia border: Head S 12 steps, turn E, walk another 12-15 steps. Face NW and look for plant from Asia root you eat.
7. Asia radishes: head NW 8-10 steps, turn W along garden path for 10-12 steps. Turn S and look for S. American plant used to make Salsa.
8. Tomatoes S. America: head West 8 steps and turn South to find plant from Africa with a large pointed seed pod, edible souther US dishes.
9. Okra Africa: face NW and walk 15 steps to look for a tiny plant that can survive the harsh climate of Antarctica.
10. Moss Antarctica: face W and walk 5-7 steps for N. American native plant that eats bugs.
11. Pitcher Plants N. America: walk due East for 5-7 steps. Stop. Head West down garden path until you reach new garden gate. At gate turn NW and walk 5-6 steps and look for plant native to Asia that pandas like to eat!
12. Bamboo Asia: Head SE to compost bins. From SE corner of compost bun take 10 steps to find spiky red stemmed plant from Asia that yields delicious summer berries.
13. Wineberries Asia: Turn NW to garden path follow path NW to garden entrance gate. Turn NW to look for plant with poisonous purple berries.

Geography Scavenger Hunt Master Plant List

1. N. America - Pokeweed
2. Africa - Balloon Milkweed
3. Europe – Red Cabbage
4. Africa /Australia – Cotton
5. S. America – Marigold
6. Europe/Asia border - Lamb’s Ear
7. Asia – Radish
8. S. America – Tomato
9. Africa - Okra
10. Antarctica – Moss
11. N. America - Pitcher Plant
12. Asia – Bamboo
13. Asia – Wineberry

** Time permitting, groups that successfully “collected” all 13 plants receive ONE seed pack they may distribute amongst themselves and safely “transport” home to be preserved or planted in future.

**Small envelopes may be used so students can divide the seeds between group members or this may be done later in class during snack time, etc.