USES OF SOME NATIVE PLANTS

Lesson presented as an interactive story, "A Day in the Life of a Local Native American 200 years ago."

Basic ideas
native people used to have only native plants and animals and natural materials to meet their needs.
Different plants have different uses.
Different parts of a plant have different uses.
Some plants require processing to be useful or edible.
Not every plant is useful.
Some plants are poisonous to eat or touch.
You must identify plants carefully. Poisonous plants don't look poisonous.
You too can learn to identify plants.

Plans we will be showing (subject to change):
oak -- acorn to make acorn mush
Douglas iris -- leaves to wrap a baby
cattail -- leaves to weave: shoot to eat; young flower to eat
soap plant -- "root" to wash with
skunk cabbage -- leaves as a grocery bag
redwood sorrel -- leaves to eat
miner's lettuce -- leaves to eat
yarrow -- medicine

Goals and Objectives:
The children will be able to successfully identify all the plants and their uses by the end of the lesson, as well as have an understanding of how the Native Americans lived in this area before settlers arrived.

Background:
It would be beneficial but not necessary for the children to know that we have local tribes, such as the Karuk, Yurok, and Miwok.
NATIVE VS EXOTIC PLANTS

Basic concepts

"Native" plants were living here before Europeans arrived, along with the Native American people.

"Exotic" plants (also called non-native or alien or adventive) were brought here by Europeans and other immigrants, accidentally or intentionally.

In their new land, some exotic plants grow so well and have so few natural controls (herbivores) that they crowd out the native plants. These are called "invasive."

Animals that depend on the native plants will die as the native plant species die.

You can help prevent invasive plants taking over. Watch for them and remove them.

Some of the common invasive species in Humboldt County:
English ivy
Pampas grass
Yellow bush lupine
Scotch and French broom
Himalayan blackberry