

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