Habitats Bring Your Schoolyard to Life!

Stonehouse Elementary School in Williamsburg, Virginia transformed an entire courtyard into a Schoolyard Habitat.

Students dig-in to create their outdoor classroom at Stonehouse Elementary.

Checkered skipper on Aromatic aster (Symphyotrichum oblongifolium)
photo by Jan Newton

Buckeye butterfly on Tickseed (Coreopsis spp.)
photo by Jan Newton

Butterfly weed (Asclepias tuberosa)
photo by Carol A. Heiser

Green tree frog on Cup plant (Silphium perfoliatum)
photo by Callie Newton

Coral honeysuckle (Lonicera sempervirens)
photo by Jan Newton

Creeping phlox (Phlox stolonifera)
photo by Carol A. Heiser

Black-eyed Susan (Rudbeckia fulgida)
photo by Lee Walker

Swamp milkweed (Asclepias incarnata)
photo by Jan Newton

Fritillary on Bee balm (Monarda didyma)
photo by Jan Newton

Standards of Learning
Student Involvement
Parent and Community Support
Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat
Native Plants Suitable for Virginia Statewide Use

** The plants in this list have been selected because they are native and widespread; therefore, they can be grown repeatedly in similar settings. These species are non-invasive, non-harmful to other native plants, and are beneficial to wildlife. Always use the scientific name when seeking plants to purchase from a nursery. For more information about plants native to your specific region, consult the Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora at www.biol.vt.edu/digital_atlas/ and the Flora of Virginia at http://floraofo virginia.org/

Trees and Shrubs

- Acer rubrum (Red maple)
- Alnus serrulata (Smooth or hazel alder)
- Betula nigra (Black Birch)
- Carya (hickory): Pignut (C. glabra); bitternut (C. cordiformis); mockernut (C. alba or C. tomentosa)
- Castanea pumila (Allegheny chinkapin)
- Corylus americana (American hazel, or filbert)
- Fagus grandifolia (American beech)
- Fraxinus americana (White ash)
- Juglans nigra (Black walnut)
- Pinus virginiana (Virginia pine)
- Prunus (cherry)
- Quercus (oak): White (Q. alba); chestnut (Q. prinus)
- Rhus (sumac): Poison (R. vernix or R. typhina); black (R. glabra)
- Rosa (rose): Pasture rose (R. carolina); swamp rose (R. palustris)
- Salix (willow): Black willow (S. nigra); prairie willow (S. humilis)
- Ulmus (elm): American elm (U. americana); slippery elm (U. rubra)

Flowering Perennials

- Asclepias (milkweed): Swamp milkweed (A. incarnata); common milkweed (A. syriaca); butterflyweed (A. tuberosa); whorled milkweed (A. verticillata)
- Eupatorium (common boneset): E. perfoliatum; green-stemmed Joe-Pye weed (E. purpureum)
- Geranium (cranesbill)
- Helianthus (sunflower): Woodland sunflower (H. divaricatus); thin-leaved sunflower (H. decapetalus); giant sunflower (H. giganteus); paleleaf sunflower (H. strumosus)
- Ipomoea (morning glory)
- Liriope (lilyturf)
- Lobelia (lobelias): Cardinal flower (L. cardinalis); dwarf lobelia (L. pusilla); Delaware lobelia (L. staminea)
- Linaria sempervirens (Toadflax)
- Oenothera (evening primrose)
- Phlox: Meadow phlox (P. maculata); summer or garden phlox (P. paniculata)
- Rudbeckia (coneflowers): Early, eastern or orange coneflower (R. fulgida); tall, green-headed or cutleaf coneflower (R. hirta)
- Solidago (goldenrods): Canada goldenrod (S. altissima); white or hairy goldenrod (S. bicolor); wheathen goldenrod (S. graminifolia); gray or dawd goldenrod (S. nemoralis); rough-stemmed goldenrod (S. rugosa)
- Verbena: Blue vervain (V. hastata); narrowleaf vervain (V. simplex); white vervain (V. irticifolia)
- Viola (violets): Marsh blue violet (V. cucullata); bird's-foot violet (V. pedata); common blue violet (V. sororia)

Grasses

- Schizachyrium scoparium (little bluestem)

Native plant list compiled by the Division of Natural Heritage, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Virginia is home to thousands of species of plants and wildlife. Many of them depend upon each other. Consider the zebra swallowtail butterfly whose exclusive larval food is the paw paw tree. Our native wildlife species evolved over time to feed on native plants. Leaves, shoots, berries, nectar or nectar are at crucial stages in their life cycle. The relationships are so specific, specific; scientists consider the relationship to be interdependent. Although non-native plants may also provide food and shelter they may not be best suited for Virginia soils and climate or provide the nutrition or other specific requirement needed by some species. This activity matches wildlife to one of the plants they depend upon. The plants and species in this activity is only a sample of the plants found in Virginia. It is not possible to include every plant specific to your area. Some of the relationships are so specific, specific; scientists consider the plant to be specific, specific. Students research native plants and animals associated with those plants and then play a card game to explore the interdependence between them.

Materials: Index cards (4 per group); copies of master lists (one per small group); field guides and other reference materials.

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Where can I find more information about the plants in the list above?

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Schoolyard Habitats: A How-To Guide


Lunch Buddies Lesson Plan

Objectives: Students will: 1) understand interdependence in ecological systems; 2) will describe examples of symbiotic relationships between plants and animals.

Method: Students research native plants and animals associated with those plants and then play a card game to explore the interdependence between them.

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