



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FORESTS • 2011

Lesson Plan Information

Estimated Duration: up to 1 hour for all activities

Materials: Activity 1: none; Activity 2: Paper, pencil, crayon; Activity 3: Popsicle sticks, string, magnifying glass, sketch pads, clipboards, pencils.

Setting: Indoors and Outdoors

Key Vocabulary: biodiversity, forests, species, trees.

Additional Resources: visit www.focusonforests.ca for fact sheets and other activities

PRIMARY

International Year of Forests

Celebrate the International Biodiversity Day (IBD) on May 22nd! IBD was created to increase the understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. The theme for IBD in 2011 is Forest Biodiversity, in celebration of the International Year of Forests. The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2011 as the International Year of Forests to raise awareness on sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

Trees and forests play an important role in many people's lives. In Canada we are fortunate enough to have lots of forests, and we depend on this natural resource for recreation, jobs, products, and a way of life. With 40% of Canada's land base currently covered by forests, many lives are tied to forest ecosystems. Forests provide jobs to hundreds of thousands of people in Canada, and the forest products industry generates billions in revenue every year. Have you ever thought about where certain products come from? Many things originate from trees and nature. The books you read, your furniture, your clothes and even some medicines come from nature!

But our dependence on forests goes beyond just economics—forests are sources of education, research, recreation, and cultural enjoyment. And that's not all! Forests provide essential ecosystem services. Ecosystem services are the benefits that people derive

directly or indirectly from ecosystems, such as water purification, climate regulation, flood control, crop pollination, nutrient cycling and waste treatment. Forest biodiversity plays an important role in maintaining these ecosystem services. Simply put, biodiversity is life in all its variety. Forest biodiversity, in particular, refers to all life forms found in forested areas and the ecological roles they perform. Lots of different tree species are found in a forest, and each of these species plays an important role in providing ecosystem services that humans cannot live without. Did you know more than 80% of the world's terrestrial biodiversity depend on forests to survive? Similarly, more than 1.6 billion people worldwide depend on forests and basic ecosystem goods and services for their livelihood.

Forests should be managed to ensure that all forest values are taken into consideration. This includes making sure that we are managing forests for economics, environmental and social reasons. These three pillars are the basis of sustainable forest management. When we manage our forests sustainably, we are ensuring that future generations also have lots of trees and forests to enjoy and that other species have a place to live.

Activities

Activity 1: The Value of Being Different

1. Go to your backyard, schoolground, woodlot or a nearby park.
2. Look around at the trees. Are they different or are they the same?
3. Have students pair off or form small groups and find their own tree. Once they have found their tree, ask them to do the following:
 - a. Use your four senses to get to know your tree.
How does it look? Feel? Smell? Sound?
 - b. Find things that make your tree unique or different.
 - c. Match up with another group and explain to them why your tree is the same or different from theirs, and discuss these differences.

Activity 2: My Favourite Tree

1. Give each of your students a large piece of paper and a pencil. Have them fold their piece of paper in four. Go outside and ask students to find their favourite tree.
 - a. One quarter of page: have them draw the shape of their tree
 - b. Second quarter of page: have them draw the tree's leaf
 - c. Third quarter of page: what words describe the bark? Have them do a bark rubbing
 - d. Fourth quarter: write a poem or a short description of the tree
2. Have your students present their findings to the rest of the group. Discuss similarities and differences among the trees chosen.

Extensions

1. Ask your students: How would this experience have been different if you had not been able to use all of your senses? Blindfold your students and have them explore their trees using touch only.
2. Ask your students: If you were an animal, what would you look for in a tree?



Activity 3: Mini-Forest in Your Yard

1. Divide the students into small groups and go to an area of your schoolyard, park, or local woodlot where a variety of plants and insects may be found.
2. Have each group choose a small study area, and mark off the area (e.g. Hula hoop, string, etc). Mark off an area of about 50cm.
3. Inspect the marked off area for different types of plants and insects. Use a popsicle stick to inspect the ground and magnifying glasses to get a closer look.
4. What do you see? Are there any plants? Is anything moving? What is dead? What is alive?
5. Have each group visit each other's areas and compare observations.
6. Sit in a circle and discuss the similarities and differences. Why is it important to have lots of different things in an ecosystem?



The Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network (BEAN) is a collaboration of education, industry, government and non-governmental organizations and agencies dedicated to increasing awareness, understanding and action related to biodiversity in Ontario.

Each year, BEAN organizes events to celebrate the International Day of Biological Diversity or International Biodiversity Day (IBD), which occurs annually on May 22nd, one month after Earth Day. IBD was designated by the United Nations to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. Each year has a theme, and the 2011 IBD theme is "Biodiversity and Forests", in recognition of the importance of forests to biodiversity, and to people.

www.biodiversityeducation.ca

Focus on Forests Provincial Education Partners

Focus on Forests is a program of the Ontario Forestry Association, offering FREE curriculum linked lesson plans, activities and fact sheets to introduce forests into the classroom.

