

Montana Small Schools Alliance
HONORING MONTANA'S FIRST PEOPLES

UNIT: Plants Used by American Indians

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SCHOOL AND COUNTY: Deerfield Colony School in Fergus County

GRADE LEVEL: 2-6

INDIAN RESERVATION REFERENCED: Flathead

SUBJECT AREAS: Science, Social Studies

LESSON DESCRIPTION: Students will research Native American plants using internet, encyclopedia, Encarta, etc.

CONTENT STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

Science Standard 3: Demonstrate knowledge of characteristics, structures and functions of living things, the process and diversity of life, and how living organisms interact with each other and their environment. Benchmarks: 1, 3, 5

Social Studies Standard 6: Students demonstrate an understanding of the impact of human interaction and cultural diversity on societies. Benchmark 4

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT MONTANA INDIANS:

Essential Understanding 3: The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs.

Additionally, each tribe has its own oral history beginning with their origins that are as valid as written histories. These histories pre-date the “discovery” of North America.

Editor's Note:

These are a series of eleven short instructional units that integrate various subject area content standards and the Montana American Indian Essential Understanding 3. The different units can be used at different times throughout the year so that students will have several opportunities to learn to Honor Montana's First Peoples of the Fort Belknap and the Flathead Reservations. Teachers should use the Fort Belknap units first.

Before beginning these units, teachers should view the official website of the Fort Belknap Nations (www.fortbelknapnations.nsn.gov) and read the home pages of the histories of the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Peoples. Also, teachers could review and use the three DVD's provided to all Montana school districts by the Indian Education for All Program at OPI. The three are *Long Ago in Montana*, *Talking without Words*, and *Tribes in Montana*. In addition, the author has provided some specific resources for these units.

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE:

Students will have gained information about American Indians from previous lessons. The root digging begins in the Spring. The leaders call the people together to celebrate the harvest of the year's 1st food and pray that the food will be plentiful. They gathered camas bulbs, tree moss, onion, Indian potatoes, and carrots. They also picked berries to supplement their root picking. They picked strawberries, service berries, then huckleberries, raspberries, chokecherries and Hawthorne berries.

OBJECTIVES:

Students will identify and describe plants used by American Indians. Students will illustrate and complete a booklet of the American Indian plants.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:

Students will watch DVD, "The Story of the Bitterroot". Students will collect information about the many plants that were used by the Salish, Kootenai, and the Pend d'Oreille for their food. They will collect all their information to make a food plant book. They will come up with a title for their book, and each page will have a drawing of the plant and a description, and how the American Indians used the plant for their food. Books will be displayed for the class to use as references.

ASSESSMENT:

Students will be assessed on neatness and completion of their booklet. They will also be given a matching page of the plants, their picture, name and description.