Water Plant Art

Grades: K-3

Subject, Science, Art

Time required:40minutes

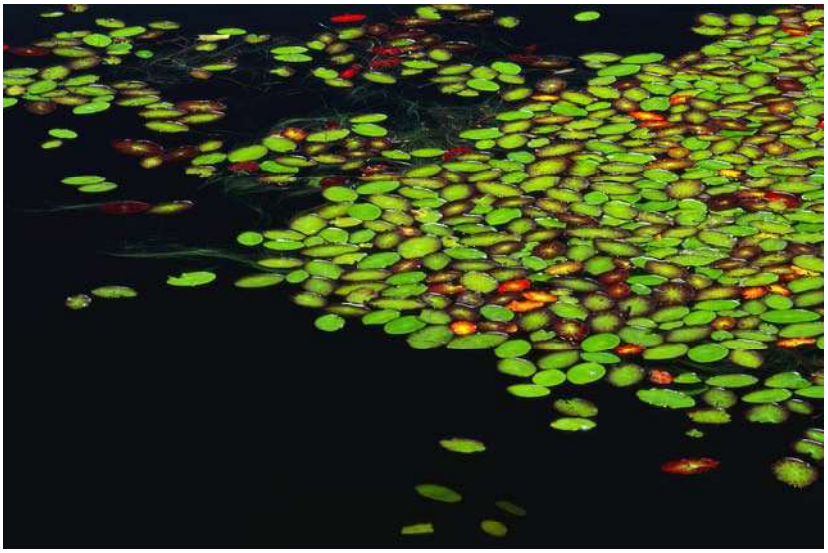
Key Concepts:
All life must have enough clean water;
Fish & wildlife need a healthy habitat

Objectives:
Students will be able to identify a variety of aquatic plants

SQUAMISH RIVERS

Key Words:
Aquatic plants

Skills:
Analysis, classification, comparing similarities and differences, discussion



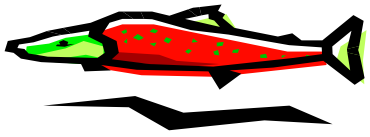
Background:

Aquatic plants grow in a variety of sizes, shapes, and colours. They are essential to the web of life in any aquatic ecosystem. The major purpose of this activity is to heighten students' awareness and appreciation of aquatic plant life.

Note: a guide to common aquatic plants would be helpful. The Golden Press guides to pond life and seashores are examples of helpful resources that tend to be readily available.

Materials

- Plant samples
- Heavy white paper
- Wax paper
- Plant press or heavy books
- Photos of aquatic plants, animals, habitats
- waterproof marking pen (optional)



Water Plant Art

Procedure:

1. Talk with students about the importance of there being a variety of plant life in aquatic habitats. Plants are important parts of aquatic ecosystems. They may provide food or shelter for aquatic animals.
2. Show students pictures of some different kinds of aquatic plants, aquatic animals, and aquatic habitats. Freshwater habitats like streams and lakes, and marine habitats like saltwater bays and ocean environments are examples.
3. Show students a small variety of a sample of local aquatic plants. Seaweed from saltwater areas or grasses and algae from freshwater areas work well. If you collect these yourself, do not take a large amount from any one area, or if possible, from any single plant. Make sure the plants are abundant and that you will do no permanent damage to the aquatic habitat by bringing your sample of plants to class. While gathering these plants, look carefully for aquatic animals. Gently remove any you find on your plant sample and put them in the water or on another plant in the environment, rather than accidentally taking them with you on your sample of plants.
4. Discuss the similarities and differences among the plants with students. Look at plant leaf shapes, colours, and size. Discuss any special adaptations that the plants may have that are specific to living in the water. Ask students to guess which animals might make use of these plants.
5. Place the plants in a pan filled with fresh water. Clean the plants. Plants may be broken into smaller size pieces for ease of placement on the white paper.
6. Gently lift the plants and place on heavy, white, porous paper. Arrange plant parts or plant into the desired design.
7. Cover the arrangement of plants with wax paper.
8. Write on the wax paper with waterproof pen the kind of plant (if known) and where and when it was found.
9. Place the artwork between several sheets of newspaper. The wax paper protects the plant, while the water will seep through the white paper. As the plant dries it will adhere to the white paper.
10. Make of stack of newspapers/art work and place on a flat surface. Place several heavy books on top or use a plant press. Drying may take several days or up to a few weeks, depending on humidity.

Extensions:

1. Go visit an aquatic habitat and gather plant samples prior to making the water plant art

Evaluation:

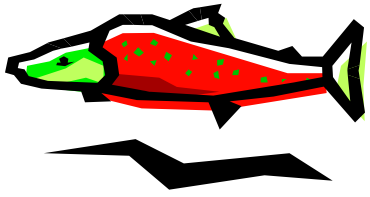
1. Name or draw two aquatic plants.
2. Add animals to the drawing and show how these plants help animals that live in water.

Community Connections:

1. Have a local expert come to the classroom to help identify plants and share a story about them.

Resource:

This activity has been adapted from “Water Plant Art” from Project WILD (1997).



Some Plants and Animals of the Squamish Estuary

Sedges and willows

Great Blue Heron

Beach pea

Some Plants and Animals of Lakes nearby Squamish

Cattail

Bulrush, pond lily, duckweed

Beaver

Some Plants and Animals of Rivers nearby Squamish

Salmon

Willow, Douglas-fir

Alder, cottonwood, salmonberry

Turkey Vultures

Some Plants and Animals of Wetlands nearby Squamish

Pond lily, sweetgale, Douglas-fir

Salamander

Skunk cabbage

Spider