

UNIT 9: NANISE' ÁÁT'EEŁII / Botany

GOAL:

To become knowledgeable of plants used in Diné Traditional Way of Life

CONCEPTS:

Baanáá' iiniih - to place offering in thankfulness,

Bee hadaałt'é ní' doodleeł - to heal,

Àąh' ádool nííł - to use functionally, internally and/or externally

INTRODUCTION:

Nanise' (plants, roots, fruits and herbs etc.) have always been a very important part of the life of Diné. It has been used medicinally, as food, as spices, as dyeing agents, to name a few uses. Some are also used by spiritualists in healing ceremonies. Always, a prayer of thankfulness and special offering is given when gathering herbs.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Nanise' baa hane'

TOPICS:

- I. Uses
 - II. Rules and Restrictions
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OBJECTIVES:

I. USES

A. Ceremonial

The student will:

- Become knowledgeable about Diné usage of native plants for ceremonial use.
- Identify at least two plants and herbs used for medicine.
- Identify two plants and herb used for traditional ceremonies.
- Become familiar with ceremonial remedies for symptoms.
- Study natural medicine and herbs for animal treatment.
- Learn about the importance of herbs, plants, plant roots used by Navajos for medicine.

B. Functional (food, spices, utensils, tools, recreational)

The student will:

- Become knowledgeable about usage of Native plants.
- Learn Navajo names for a minimum of four edible plants.
 1. Yucca fruit
 2. Hosh
 3. Peaches
 4. Juniper berries
 5. Wild plum

- Learn how to plant edible plant seeds
- Study functional uses of traditional utensils/tools derived from plants.
 1. Utensils
 2. Gourds
 3. Cooking Brushes
 4. Cooking Sticks
 5. Poker Sticks
 6. Hair Brushes
 7. Weaving Tools
- Study the use of plants for recreational equipment and activities.
 1. Tsidił
 2. Bows and Arrows
 3. Poles (Games)
 4. Ball (Shoe Game)
- Learn the uses of two types of grain foods.
 1. Corn meal
 2. Wheat
- Be able to identify at least five of the following vegetable plants.
 1. Corn
 2. Squash
 3. Wild Onions
 4. Beans
 5. Wild Carrots
 6. Wild Spinach
 7. Wild Potatoes
- Learn how to make one of the following herb drinks.
 1. Navajo tea
 2. Sumac lemonade
- Be able to identify plants that are used for dyes.
- Identify plants which make particular colors.
- Identify plant material used as insulation for building hooghans, táchééh (sweathouse), noo' (storage bins) etc.
- Identify the available resources used in building and other common uses.
- Learn about different types of trees used for logs, i.e. logs, insulation, plants.

C. Safety: Poison Plants

The student will:

- Be able to identify certain poisonous plants. In particular, those that cause; blindness, death, unconsciousness and hallucinations.
- Learn about prevention and safety measures.

II. RULES AND RESTRICTIONS

The student will:

- Accept that plants should not be picked indiscriminately.
- Demonstrate that an offering of thanksgiving is always given when we are going to use an herb for medicinal or spiritual purposes.
- Identify some plants and herbs used for medicine.
- Learn that seasons effect the potency or strength of herbs/plants.

- Learn about when to access or acquire certain plants.

ACTIVITIES

The student will:

- Learn how to plant edible plant seeds.
- Learn Navajo names for each edible plant.
- Compile a picture model of the dyeing product.
- Work/Produce dyed yarn.
- Produce a rug using the dyed wool.
- Study Keish dye used on moccasins.
- Become aware of the uses of white clay to dye female moccasins.
- Become aware of the use of white clay to dye wool.
- Become aware of processing sheep skin.
- Study combining different colors to make another color.
- Demonstrate how to build fire from natural material.
- Identify plant materials used as insulations for building hogans, táchéé, storage bins, etc.
- Learn at least two traditional games.

VOCABULARY

Tools made from nanise'/plants:

- Adee': Gourd
- Ádítsiin: Cooking sticks
- Honeeshgish: Fire poker sticks
- Béézhóó': Hair brush
- Bee'atłóhí: Weaving tools

Recreational equipment:

- Tsidił: Sticks and dice game
- Iłtíí' dóó k'aa: Bow and Arrow
- Kéeshjéé': Shoe game
- Hał, bee'aditsií: Stick
- Tólásht'óshí: Yucca root ball
- Tsibąąs: Hoops

Grains:

- Naadąá' ak'áán: Cornmeal
- Tł'oh naadąá': Wheat

Fruits:

- Tsá'aszi'niteelí bi hashk'aan: Yucca Fruit
- Hosh niteelí bineest'ą': Cactus fruit
- Didzétsoh: Peaches
- Dzidze': Juniper berries

Vegetables:

- Naadąá': Corn
- Naayízí: Squash
- Tł'ohchin: Wild onions
- Naa'óhí: Beans
- Chaasht'ezhiitsoh: Wild carrots
- Waa': Wild spinach
- Nímasii: Wild potatoes

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- Haza'aleehtsoh: Wild celery

Beverages:

- Dééh: Navajo tea

- Chiiłchin: Sumac lemonade