



SUPPORT MATERIALS FOR TEACHERS

SUGGESTED SHORT RESEARCH ACTIVITY

Connect Through Research: Natural Resources and Traditions

Introduce this activity by having students watch the [Natural Resources](#) video segment from the *American Indian Textiles* video.

Many cultural traditions are based on the use of natural resources that exist in a particular region. The plant materials that were available to Native peoples in eastern Kentucky influenced the textiles they created. Several were mentioned in the video, including dogbane, rattlesnake master, stinging nettle, giant cane, milkweed, basswood, bloodroot, bedstraw, Osage orange, goldenrod, oak, and false indigo. Some – but not all – of these plants also would have been available to Native peoples in Oklahoma after their removal from the Eastern Woodlands in the 1830s.

Invite students to work in small groups to research one of these plants and create a multimedia presentation that includes:

- a description and photos(s) of the plant
- information about its range and habitat
- information about how it was used in the production of Native American textiles
- what part of the plant was used
- when it was harvested
- how it was processed
- how it was used

Presentations could include additional uses of the plant beyond textiles (such as for food or medicines) and any other interesting facts.

If possible, enhance the research possibilities by taking students to a park, nature sanctuary, greenhouse, or other place where they might observe some of these plants growing or by inviting a naturalist to visit your classroom.

The **Native Plants Information Sheets** provide information about five of the plants most commonly associated with Native American textiles in Kentucky: dogbane and rattlesnake master (fibers); and bloodroot, goldenrod, and black walnut (dyes).

ALERT! There are several websites with questionable content regarding how Native peoples used plants. Provided below is a list of reliable sites to consult.

Fibers

https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/apocynum_androsaemifolium.shtml

This website, maintained by the US Forest Service (part of the US Department of Agriculture), includes extensive information about this common species of dogbane.

<https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/Eryngium-yuccifolium.shtml>

This website, maintained by the US Forest Service (part of the US Department of Agriculture), includes extensive information about rattlesnake master.

Native Plants

http://campus.murraystate.edu/academic/faculty/hwhiteman/field/plants/plantgallery/common_plants_of_kentucky.htm

This website, maintained by Murray State University, provides information about many common Kentucky plant species, including black walnut.

<http://naeb.brit.org/>

The Native American Ethnobotany Database is hosted and maintained by the University of Michigan, Dearborn.

<https://plants.usda.gov/home>

This website, maintained by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (part of the US Department of Agriculture), provides standardized information on plants of the US and its territories. Information is included on plants culturally significant to Native peoples.

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/plantmaterials/technical/publications/?cid=stelprdb1043052>

This website, maintained by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (part of the US Department of Agriculture), provides information on culturally significant plants to Native peoples in the US and its territories.

<https://www.choctawnation.com/early-choctaw-traditional-arts>

This website, maintained by the Choctaw Nation, provides information on early Choctaw traditional arts with photographs and descriptions of various artifacts.

Native Plant Dyes

<https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/ethnobotany/dyes.shtml>

This website, maintained by the US Forest Service (part of the US Department of Agriculture), discusses native plant dyes and the plants used for dyes. The two “For More Information” links at the bottom of the page take you to additional sites with reliable information.

<https://www.ohio.edu/sites/default/files/sites/museum-complex/files/VegetalDyes.pdf>

A link to a pdf of an activity booklet from the Kennedy Museum and Ohio University that looks at natural dyeing from both the Navajo Nation and Southeastern Ohio. It includes information on dyes, plants, gathering tips, and processing plants into dye.

http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/pdfs/dye_plants.pdf

A link to a pdf of an activity from the Illinois State Museum on natural dyeing. Includes information on native dye plants and directions on preparing a dye bath [Note: the associated website for this activity is from 2006].

https://omsi.edu/exhibitions/row/docs/Roots-of-Wisdom_Natural-Dyes-Demo-Guide.pdf

A link to natural dye demonstration activity, with detailed instructions and links to reference material.

Plants Preserved in Rockshelters

<https://archeology.uark.edu/ozarkbluffshelters/>

This website, maintained by the Arkansas Archaeological Survey (part of the University of Arkansas), provides in-depth information on Arkansas’ dry rockshelters. These sites are a useful comparison to the dry rockshelters of Eastern Kentucky.

Of special note are the perishable artifacts from these shelters:

<https://archeology.uark.edu/ozarkbluffshelters/importance/rare-perishable-artifacts/>

provides photos and detailed information on textiles, many of which are made from similar fibers and using similar techniques as what was discussed and demonstrated in the *American Indian Textiles* video.

KENTUCKY ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Reading and Writing Standards - Guiding Principles for Reading and Composition

- Students will read, comprehend and analyze complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.
- Students will interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- Students will compose informative and explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization and analysis of content.

Reading and Writing Standards - Literacy Practices

1. Recognize that text is anything that communicates a message.
2. Employ, develop and refine schema to understand and create text.
6. Collaborate with others to create new meaning.
8. Engage in specialized, discipline-specific literacy practices.

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