



SUPPORT MATERIALS FOR TEACHERS

SUGGESTED SHORT RESEARCH ACTIVITY

Connect Through Research: Natural Resources and Traditions

This handout provides basic information about five of the plants most commonly associated with Native American textiles in Kentucky.

Plant Information Sheets in This Handout

Plants Used for Cordage

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Information You Will Find in Each Plant Information Sheet

Plant Name: the plant's common name and (*Latin name*)

Description: what the plant looks like

Geographical Range: where the plant grows in North America

Habitat: the kind of environment the plant grows in best

Use in Native Textile Production: how Native peoples used the plant

Plant Part Used: what part of the plant Native peoples used

How to Process: how to prepare the plant for use

Used for: what Native peoples made after they processed the plant

Website References: places to find more information about the plant

Color Pictures of the Plant

PLANT NAME	Dogbane
DESCRIPTION	Stalks can grow up to 6 feet tall; stalk will typically be dark reddish-brown, with glossy green leaves that grow in opposing pairs up the stem; flowers can be white to light pink - they attract pollinators
GEOGRAPHICAL RANGE	North America (all)
HABITAT	Moist soils, disturbed soils; can spread easily
USE IN NATIVE TEXTILE PRODUCTION	Fibers
PLANT PART USED	Stem
HOW TO PROCESS	Stems are stripped of outer bark and woody inner pith. Inner fiber can be pounded/shredded further for a finer fiber, processed to remove natural gums, or used as-is
USED FOR	Cordage/string, bags, nets, baskets, outer clothing/ adornments
SUGGESTED WEBSITE REFERENCES	https://fibershed.org/2020/02/11/native-plants-for-textiles-3-bast-fibers-to-know-beyond-hemp-and-flax/ https://www.csueastbay.edu/museum/virtual-museum/native-california/restore-learn-share/cordage.html



Pink and white flower of Spreading Dogbane or Indian Hemp (Apocynum androsaemifolium).

Photograph by Aphidoidea (Emily S. Kloosterman) at en.wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=8537758>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apocynum_androsaemifolium



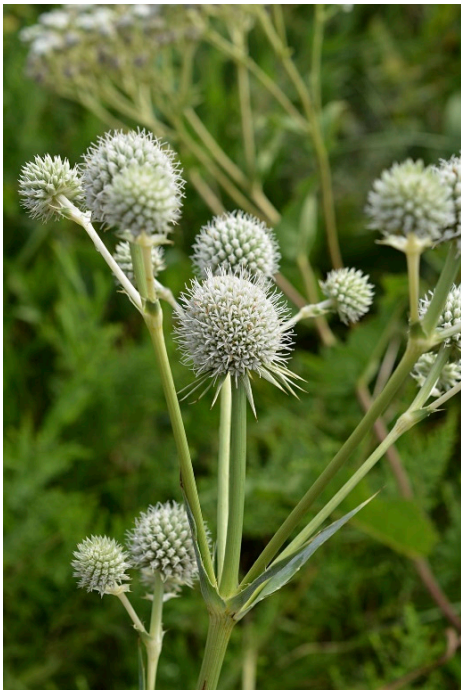
Dogbane leaves and stems (Apocynum androsaemifolium).

Photograph by Salicyna - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=59315268>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apocynum_leaves_of_Apocynum_androsaemifolium

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PLANT NAME	Rattlesnake Master
DESCRIPTION	Long, blade-like leaves with a fine 'hair' along the outer edge; a central stalk with white to cream spike heads that attract pollinators
GEOGRAPHICAL RANGE	Eastern and Central United States
HABITAT	Often thought of as a prairie plant, is both drought and flood tolerant
USE IN NATIVE TEXTILE PRODUCTION	Fibers
PLANT PART USED	Leaves
HOW TO PROCESS	Leaves can be pounded and shredded while green, or re-hydrated and worked if dry
USED FOR	Cordage/string, slippers, bags, mats
SUGGESTED WEBSITE REFERENCE	https://rattlesnakemaster.org/rattlesnake-master-a-plant-with-a-past/



Rattlesnake Master (Eryngium yuccifolium) seed heads.

Photograph by Christopher David Benda.

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



Rattlesnake Master (Eryngium yuccifolium) leaves.

Photograph by Christopher David Benda.

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

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PLANT NAME	Bloodroot
DESCRIPTION	Mounding perennial that grows to approx. 6 inches; white 8-petaled flowers with serrated leaves; roots are reddish in color
GEOGRAPHICAL RANGE	Eastern and Central North America
HABITAT	Semi-shaded, moist and acidic soils
USE IN NATIVE TEXTILE PRODUCTION	Dye
PLANT PART USED	Roots
HOW TO PROCESS	Chop roots into small pieces and soak in water for at least 2 hours to overnight. WEAR GLOVES. Boil and then simmer 30 min and strain out roots. Add fiber and simmer at least 30 min. Remove from heat, cover, and cool overnight. Rinse till water runs clear.
USED FOR	Dyestuff
SUGGESTED WEBSITE REFERENCES	https://newcropsorganics.ces.ncsu.edu/herb/bloodroot/ https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/bloodroot-sanguinaria-canadensis-1



Bloodroot (Sanguinaria canadensis).

Photograph by Eric Hunt - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=102298891>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanguinaria>

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PLANT NAME	Goldenrod
DESCRIPTION	Clump-forming perennial wildflower with bright yellow "fluffy" flower plumes; important pollinator
GEOGRAPHICAL RANGE	Eastern and Central North America
HABITAT	Full sun; tolerates most habitats
USE IN NATIVE TEXTILE PRODUCTION	Dye
PLANT PART USED	Flowers
HOW TO PROCESS	Best for dye when harvested fresh and flowers are at full bloom. Snip the clumps of flowers (Note: the entire plant can be used for dye but only flowers will give yellow dye). Simmer flowers in water 30-60 min. Can let the flowers soak in the water overnight or strain immediately. Add fiber to dye bath and simmer 30-60 min. Cover and let cool overnight. Rinse till water runs clear.
USED FOR	Dyestuff
SUGGESTED WEBSITE REFERENCE	https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/ethnobotany/dyes.shtml



Old field goldenrod (*Solidago nemoralis*).

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<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goldenrod>

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PLANT NAME	Black Walnut
DESCRIPTION	Deciduous tree in the walnut family; nuts are an important food
GEOGRAPHICAL RANGE	Eastern and Central North America
HABITAT	Prefers moist soils with full sun; often considered a “weed” tree; easily spreads
USE IN NATIVE TEXTILE PRODUCTION	Dye
PLANT PART USED	Nut hulls
HOW TO PROCESS	Outer hulls of walnuts are collected after the inner nuts have been harvested (hulls are best used fresh and still green). Hulls are then broken up and simmered in water for 30-60 min. Can soak hulls in water overnight or drain and use dye bath immediately. Add fiber and simmer 30-60 min. Cover and let soak overnight. Rinse till water runs clear.
USED FOR	Dyestuff
SUGGESTED WEBSITE REFERENCES	https://www.kon.org/urc/v12/doty.html http://libraryexhibits.uvm.edu/omeka/exhibits/show/uvmtrees/bw_intro/dye_wood_industrial_black_waln



Eastern black walnut leaves and fruit (*Juglans nigra*).

Photograph in the Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1073230>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juglans_nigra



Black walnut tree (*Juglans nigra*).

<https://www.arborday.org/trees/treeguide/TreeDetail.cfm?ItemID=934>

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