

Plant Scavenger Hunt

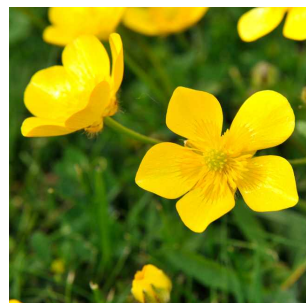
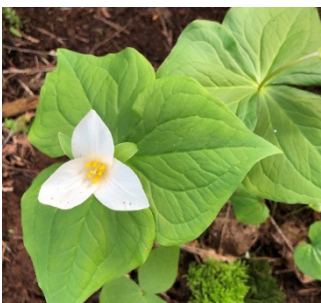
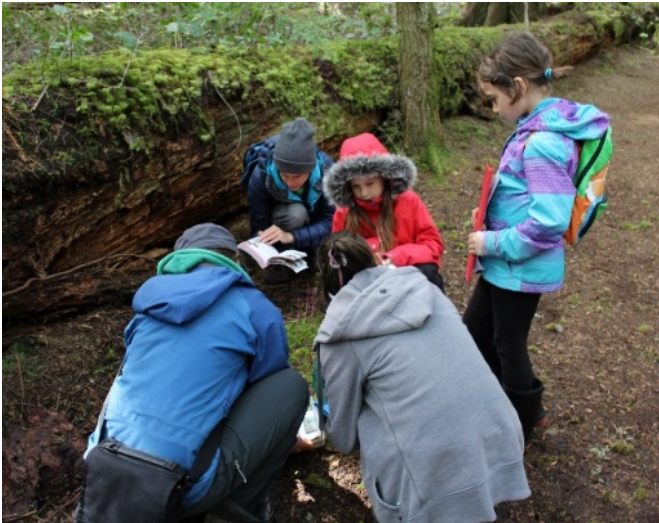


United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



**MOUNT
ARROWSMITH**
BIOSPHERE REGION

This activity is to see how many local plant species you can find! Look around in your backyard, or in a nearby park or forest. Use the descriptions as clues while you hunt for each plant! Find something not on this list? Draw it at the end to identify later.





Shrubs



Salal • *Gaultheria shallon*

Description: Its egg-shaped, serrated leaves are shiny and dark green on the upper surface, and rough and lighter green on the lower. Salal has small pinkish or white flowers that produce reddish to blue, spherical fruit.

Fun Fact: Salal is often used in flower bouquets, but traditionally First Nation tribes would mash and dry the berries into cakes and fruit leather.



Dull Oregon-Grape • *Mahonia nervosa*

Description: Each stem has typically 9-19 leaves, each toothed and shiny, but less so than tall Oregon-grape. Dull Oregon-grape has bright yellow flowers that appear in the beginning of April.

Fun Fact: The berries are very tart to eat, but make good jelly. In the past, the berries and bark were used to treat liver, gall-bladder, and eye problems.



Trailing Blackberry • *Rubus ursinus*

Description: Leaves usually have 3 leaflets. It has white or pink flowers with narrow petals that bloom from April to August. The sweet berries become ripe in late summer, appearing dark purple, dark red, or black and up to 2cm in length.

Fun Fact: This is our only native blackberry. Be careful when you encounter it, the thorns may cling to your clothes!



Red Huckleberry • *Vaccinium parvifolium*

Description: The plant has a bright green shoot and leaves that are round to oval in shape. It has white and pink bell-shaped flowers that bloom in April and May. The edible berry is red to orange in colour.

Fun Fact: Red huckleberries are an important food source for many wildlife such as birds, deer, and black bears.



English Holly • *Ilex aquifolium*

Description: Leaves are dark green on the upper surface and lighter on the underside, oval, leathery, and shiny; they have 3-5 sharp spines on each side of the leaves. The flowers are white, slightly pink, or yellowish and have 4 petals. They produce a red or yellow stone fruit.

Fun Fact: Holly has been grown for decorations at Christmas time. However, the plant is very invasive, meaning it is living outside of its natural habitat and generally grows rapidly and aggressively due to limited competition with native species.



Scotch Broom • *Cytisus scoparius*

Description: This species is also highly invasive. It has a green shoot and small leaves composed of three leaflets. In the spring/summer they are covered in yellow flowers from top to bottom.

Fun Fact: Scotch broom was introduced on Vancouver Island in 1850 by Captain Walter Colquhoun. The captain planted seeds in Sooke and only three plants were germinated. Today, we see scotch broom everywhere!



Salmonberry • *Rubus spectabilis*

Description: It has a woody stem covered in fine prickles. The leaves are composed of 3 toothed leaflets. The plant has pink flowers that bloom in April or May, after which they produce a berry that resembles a large shiny yellow to orange-red blackberry.

Fun Fact: Salmonberries are among the earliest berries to ripen on Vancouver Island from May to June.

Ferns



Deer Fern • *Blechnum spicant*

Description: Deer fern is very similar to sword fern, but the leaflets are attached to the leaf axis all along their bases and each leaf has round edges. It is also leathery in texture.

Fun Fact: In the past, the leaves were chewed on by Hesquiat hunters and travellers as a hunger suppressant. The leaves were also used as a medicine for skin sores.



Sword Fern • *Polystichum munitum*

Description: They grow in tight clumps and can reach 50-180 cm in height. Each stalk has paired leaves all the way up, each leaf has pointy edges. Looking under the leaf you will see two rows of round spores.

Fun Fact: Also known as "pala-pala plant" in many other languages from the traditional game called "pala-pala". The game involves seeing who can pull the most leaflets off a leaf in one single breath while saying "pala".



Bracken Fern • *Pteridium aquilinum*

Description: The plant has large fronds in the shape of triangles; each frond can grow up to 2.5m long, but are typically 0.6-2m high. Fern spores are found on the underleaf and have a much more linear structure than the circular ones found on other ferns.

Fun Fact: Bracken fern is the world's most widespread fern. The stem was harvested by nearly all coastal peoples, however the leaves are considered poisonous to eat.

Trees



Douglas-fir • *Pseudotsuga menziesii*

Description: They are 20-100m tall. The needles completely encircle the branches. The cones are distinct because of the 3-pointed piece that sticks out above each scale.

Fun Fact: Traditionally, the wood was used for fires, fishing hooks, and snowshoes. The branches were used for bedding and the seeds were eaten. Today, it is often used for heavy-duty construction and building.



Arbutus • *Arbutus menziesii*

Description: They are known for their red flaking bark and edible red berries. Arbutus flowers are white and bloom in April or May.

Fun Fact: Arbutus is Latin for "strawberry tree" due to its bright red berries. The berries are so bright and pretty, some First Nations would use them as beads to make necklaces.



Bigleaf Maple • *Acer macrophyllum*

Description: It has the largest leaves of any maple species, 15-30cm across, and has 5 lobes. The flowers are small and appear greenish-yellow in early April.

Fun Fact: In many First Nations languages the tree is called the "paddle tree" because the wood was used to make paddles.



Western Redcedar • *Thuja plicata*

Description: They can reach 65-70m in height and have a trunk width of 3-4m. The foliage is green and forms flat sprays with scale-like leaves. The cones are very small, only 10-18mm long and 4-5mm wide, with brown overlapping scales.

Fun Fact: Western redcedar is British Columbia's official tree. It also plays a key role in First Nations culture, being valued for spiritual uses, healing properties, and its ability to make tools and objects.

Flowers



Western Trillium • *Trillium ovatum*

Description: They have a lightly-scented, white star-shaped flower with a yellow centre. The white flower fades to soft pink as they age. The flowers are seen from March to May. The leaves are in groups of 3 and each have a distinct point.

Fun Fact: Ants are very attracted to trilliums due to a tiny oil structure that is attached to the seed. Ants carry the seeds back to their nests where they eat the oil structure and feed it to their larvae. The leftover seeds are thrown away into garbage piles.



Vanilla-leaf • *Achlys triphylla*

Description: Vanilla leaf is very common and abundant in the area. When dry, it emits a vanilla scent. The leaves are composed of 3 leaflets. The flowers bloom in April until July; they lack petals, instead grow as long white spikes.

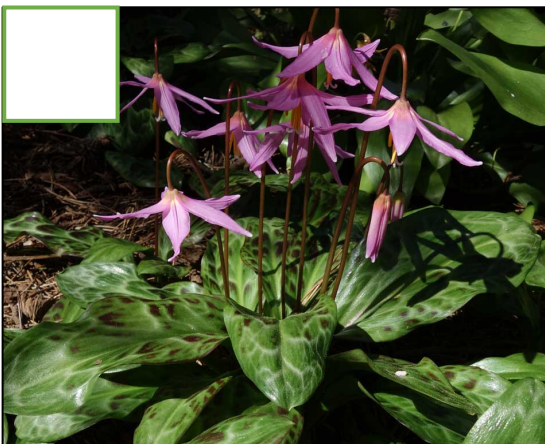
Fun Fact: Historically, First Nations peoples have used vanilla leaf as an insect repellent. They dried the leaves and hung them up to keep mosquitos and flies away.



Skunk Cabbage • *Lysichiton americanum*

Description: It has a bright yellow lantern-shaped flower that grows 25cm tall from the base of its large green leaves. The flowers start blooming in March and can remain in bloom until summer. The leaves are usually shiny, bright green, and waxy.

Fun Fact: Skunk cabbage gets its name from the "skunky" unpleasant smell it emits. The scent is a way to attract pollinators that like rotting meat.

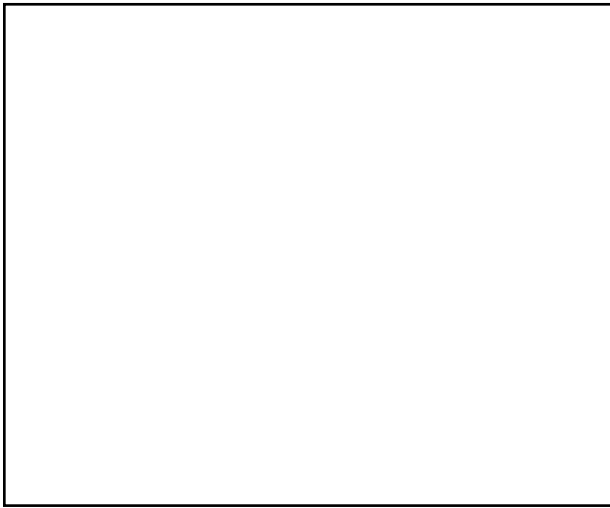


Pink Fawn Lily • *Erythronium revolutum*

Description: It has two wide, flat, mottled green leaves near the ground, with a single stalk growing up from between them. The stalk droops at the tip and 1-2 pink flowers with yellow centres grow from there. The flowers can be found blooming in April.

Fun Fact: Several First Nations tribes ate the lily's bulbs. Some ate them on hot days because they are cool and moist inside. It was said if you did not drink water after eating the bulbs, you would get sick.

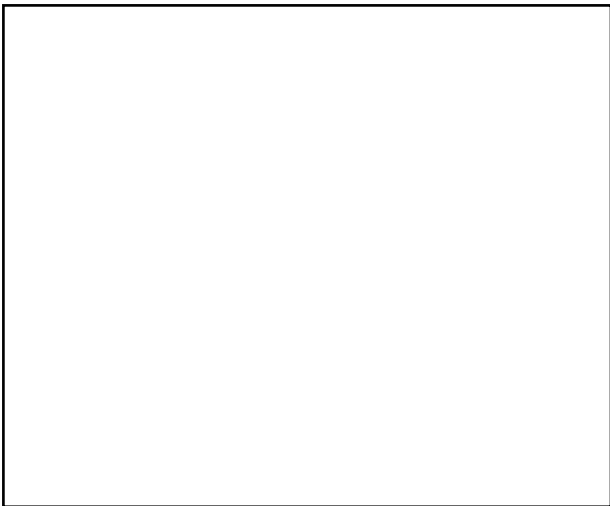
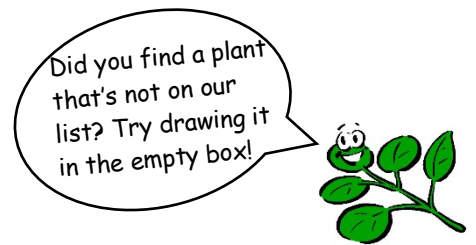
Other Plants



Sketch or draw the plant in the box

Title of Plant:

Description:



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Title of Plant:

Description:

Send us feedback on how this activity went and we'll enter you into our weekly draw!

Show us your results! Snap a picture and share it with us on social media, or email it to the MABR Coordinator, at mandy.hobkirk@viu.ca



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