**Quick & Easy Habitat Education Activities**

**Nature Detective Walk**  
*Developed by Starflower Foundation*

| Description: | Students go to a habitat area and use their senses to learn about the plants and animals they studied during the *Nature Detective Discovery* activity. They learn about ways to identify these plants and animals using their senses of touch, sight, smell and hearing. They may also use the sense of hearing to discover birds or other animals while going on their walk. |

**Objectives:**  
- Students use their senses to observe and identify plants and animals in habitat areas that they originally studied in *Nature Detective Discovery* activity.  
- Students use words to describe characteristics of plants they study by using their senses.  
- Students learn the common name of selected plants in the habitat area.

**Kit Materials:**  
- Starflower Plant ID Cards: western red cedar, bigleaf maple tree, beaked hazelnut, Douglas fir, Nootka rose, vine maple, black cottonwood, yarrow, pearly everlasting  
- ‘Mystery Nature Objects’ from *Nature Detectives Discovery* activity for plants selected for walk

**Before Activity:** Go to the habitat area and find some of the plants used in the *Nature Detective Discovery* activity. Use the Starflower Plant ID cards to help identify these plants. Identify ‘stations’ that will be used when returning with students. Note which ‘Mystery Nature Objects’ to bring along on the walk to associate with the plants.

**Activity:**  
- Before entering the habitat area show and practice forming a ‘learning circle’ which allows everyone to see and share (students form a double or triple row around an object: front row takes one step back and kneels, second row allows spaces to allow back row to see. Back row should be taller students). Remind students of the ‘Everybody Needs a Home’ story. Review outdoor etiquette.  
- At the forest entry say, “Let’s see if we can be ‘Nature Detectives’ to use our senses to find out about the plants and animals that live in this habitat area.” Review how to use senses to be ‘Nature Detectives’.  
- As a class, go to plant ‘stations’ and show related ‘Mystery Nature Objects’ from *Nature Detectives Discovery* activity to help students remember the name of the plant. Have students use their senses to touch, smell and look at the plants. Have them use words to describe characteristics of each plant, and how they might tell someone how to recognize this plant.  
- Examples of ‘stations’ and activities:  
  - **Western red cedar:** Use touch to feel the bark- How does it feel? Rough? Soft? Hairy? Use smell to scratch and sniff the leaves. Use words to describe. Use sight to look at the leaves (optional: use magnifiers). What do they remind you of? What part of a fish do they look like? (scales) Show related ‘Mystery Nature Object’ such as cedar leaf and/or essential oil of cedar. Who can remember the name of this tree?  
  - **Bigleaf maple:** Touch the bark of this tree. How does it feel? Smooth? Bumpy? Look on the ground for a leaf shaped like this (show leaf). Let’s count the lobes of the leaf (5). Find a seed from this tree. How would you describe it? Show ‘Mystery Nature Objects’ maple seed. Who can name this tree?  
  - **Beaked hazelnut:** Leaf (fall/spring) or catkin (winter/spring): Gently touch. How does it feel? Look at the leaf or catkin. What shape is it? Touch and look ‘Mystery Nature Objects’ hazelnut. How does it feel? Squishy? Hard? Round? Square? Who can remember the name of this tree?  
  - **Bird sound:** Listen for sounds of birds, use sight to see if you can locate the bird. If possible, identify the bird or guess the name from sight or sound. Have students use words to describe the sound and visual sighting of the bird.  
  - **Other animal sounds:** Listen for other sounds such as frog croaking, cricket song, woodpecker digging a hole, squirrel chatter. Use words to describe the sounds. Respectfully attempt to locate the source of the sound. If the source is found use sight to describe the animal in words (color, shape, size, etc).  
- Summarize: Our senses help us learn about and recognize plants in habitat areas.

**Vocabulary**  
- **Identify:** to make known by observing recognizable characteristics  
- **Identity:** the sameness of characteristics in different instances  
- **Observe:** to watch something carefully, with attention to detail or behaviour, with the purpose of arriving at a judgement (such as its identity)

**Washington State EALRs**  
- **Communication 1.1, 1.2** Students will focus attention, listen, and observe to gain and interpret information.  
- **Science 1.1** Use properties to identify, describe and categorize substances, materials, and objects, and use characteristics to categorize living things.

**Seattle School District Standards**  
- **2.1, 2.2** We can learn about things around us by watching carefully or by doing something to things to see what happens.  
- **2.2** Describing things as correctly as possible is important in science and allows people to compare with one another what they see.