



Native vs weeds

Activity developed by Becky McCann, Heytesbury District Landcare Network

Curriculum connections

Use of this learning and teaching activity may contribute to achievement of elements of the Standards. Indications of relevant Domains and Levels in the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards* are provided to assist teachers to make decisions about the appropriateness of the activity for their students.

Refer to introductory notes for VELS curriculum connections which define the relevant standards in greater detail.

Victorian Essential Learning Standards Domains and (Levels):

Civics and Citizenship (3,4)
The Humanities – Geography (4)
Science (3,4)

Duration: 30 minutes.

Setting: The classroom or outdoors.

Summary

This activity enables students to understand that a weed is a plant that is growing in an area where it is not wanted.

Student outcomes

This activity will enable students to:

- Describe what a weed is and understand the complexity of weed management.
- Identify a range of native and weed species.

Background notes for teachers

Weeds are plants that are growing in areas where they are not wanted – they are plants out of place. Weeds can have a negative impact on the growth and health of native plants, native animals, crops or stock. Weeds are often plants that are introduced from overseas or other parts of Australia, have no natural predators and therefore spread rapidly. In contrast, indigenous native plants are plants that grow naturally in the local area. Plants that are native to Australia can become weeds where growing in areas that they are not usually found naturally.

Materials

- Samples of weeds and native plants from your local area OR the Native vs weeds cards. These can be laminated to ensure they can be reused
- Worksheet: Native vs weeds (one per student)
- Optional: Identification books or fact sheets for students to identify plants.

The activity

1. **Activity preparation (if using plant samples):** Select a range of between 6-12 native and weed species that grow in your local area and collect samples of each. Visit www.weeds.org.au or contact your local council or Catchment Management Authority for a comprehensive list of weeds and native plants in your area.
2. Lay out the chosen plant specimens or cards on a table and give each a letter.
3. **Starting the activity:** Introduce this activity by brainstorming as a class – what is a weed?
4. Hand out the Worksheet: Native vs weeds and ask students to decide which plants are native to the local area and which are weeds.
5. **Discussion:** Ask students how they could tell which plant was a weed or a native? Did they use the characteristics they identified in the class brainstorm? (There is no way of distinguishing between the two apart from being able to identify the plant!)

6. Discuss the following questions as a class:
- Why it is important to control weeds in the natural and built environment?
 - What methods can be used to manage weeds?
 - Why it is difficult to control weeds?
7. Ensure weed clippings are disposed of properly at the end of the activity to avoid spreading these weeds further!

The table below gives some suggestions of weed and native species that may be used in this activity. The native and weed/non-native species opposite each other look similar to each other.

Weed species	Native species
Sweet Pittosporum	Kangaroo Apple
Pampas Grass	Gahnia
Spanish Heath	Pink Heath
Ivy	Clematis
Cootamundra wattle, Cape Wattle or Coast Wattle	Blackwood, Hop Wattle or Black Wattle
Cypress, Pine Willow	Cherry Ballart Eucalyptus
Blackberry	Native Raspberry
Serrated Tussock Phalaris and other weedy grass species	Poa species Kangaroo Grass
Gorse English Broom	Native Bush Pea (<i>Pultenea</i>) Prickly Moses

Answers (if using Native vs weeds Cards)

A	Native	Bush Pea or Eggs and Bacon
B	Weed	Gorse
C	Weed	English Ivy
D	Native	Clematis or Old Mans Beard
E	Native	Drooping Sheoak
F	Weed	Weeping Willow
G	Weed	Serrated tussock
H	Weed	Blackberry
I	Native	Native Raspberry
J	Native	Kangaroo Grass
K	Weed	Chilean Needle Grass

Related LandLearn activities

Learning in the Garden activity booklet on the *LandLearning CD*. Activities include 'The Peter Pan Theory of Seed Dispersal'.

Biodiversity Up Close – An audit of biodiversity in school grounds and beyond available for free download from www.landlearn.net.au/resources

 **Worksheet: Native vs weeds**

Name: _____

For each plant pictured on the Native vs weeds cards or collected, decide if it is a native plant or a weed. Place a circle around your answer below. Write down the plant name if you know what it is.

A Native Weed Plant Name: _____

B Native Weed Plant Name: _____

C Native Weed Plant Name: _____

D Native Weed Plant Name: _____

E Native Weed Plant Name: _____

F Native Weed Plant Name: _____

G Native Weed Plant Name: _____

H Native Weed Plant Name: _____

I Native Weed Plant Name: _____

J Native Weed Plant Name: _____

K Native Weed Plant Name: _____

