

## Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania

### Wild Flowers and Plants Interest Project Award



To earn this interest project you must complete the **two Skill Builder activities with stars**, one Technology, Service Project, and one Career Exploration activity. Also complete two activities from any category that you choose.

#### Skill Builders

\*1. Create a wild flower and plant notebook using a sketchbook or folder with notebook paper. Go on several walks from spring through summer to see wild plants growing in their native homes. Use your notebook to record a general description of at least thirty wild plants and flowers. Ferns may be included in your selections. Use a wildflower field guide to identify each plant. Do not pick or dig any plants.

\*2. In your notebook, make a close study of ten plants from your selection. Sketch and color each plant. Complete a wild plant worksheet by describing: Where did you locate the plant? (woods, field, swamp, etc.) How high does it grow? Do leaves grow from the root at the base of the plant, or along the stem? Describe the leaves. (size, color, shape, smooth or jagged edges, etc.) Describe the flower. (color, shape, and number of petals) Is the blossom fragrant? Does the plant bear fruit? If so, is it edible? Use a field guide to properly identify each plant.

3. With the help of a garden/plant catalog or flower field guide, look for a United States map and determine the temperature zone for the wild plants you have identified. This U.S. map was compiled by the Agricultural Department and serves as a broad guideline to extreme temperatures in your area. By studying this map you will be able to determine if your plants can survive in other parts of the United States.

4. Grab a flashlight and take a night hike. Observe whether any of your plants have the flower closed or the leaves folded. Also notice if there are any insects around them.

5. Be able to recognize poisonous plants in your area such as: Poison Ivy, Poison Sumac, Poison Oak, or Stinging Nettle. Become well acquainted with these so you will recognize them at any season of the year, as these plants can be poisonous in the winter too. Know how to protect yourself against them and what to do for such poisonings.

## Technology

1. Try your hand at photographing wild plants. Borrow a 35mm or digital camera from a family member or purchase an inexpensive disposable camera. Select a few plants and photograph them during different stages of growth. Put them together in a scrapbook or display.
2. Visit a Museum of Natural History that displays plant life from your region of the country. Find out how the artificial plants are made and who crafted them.
3. Learn the Conservation Pledge:  
**"I give my pledge as an American to save and faithfully defend from waste the natural resources of my country – its soil and minerals, its forests, waters and wildlife."**  
Find out what organizations in your area are doing to protect wild plant life. Discover if your state has any laws for the protection of wild plants. Are there wild plants in your area in danger of extinction?
4. Visit a Web site or library for information on the care and propagation of endangered plants.

## Service Project

1. Teach the meaning of the following words to younger Girl Scouts by creating a word search or crossword puzzle: endangered, conservation, extinct, perennial, biennial, annual, etc. Add words that you have learned while completing this Interest Project and/or the names of wild flowers and plants from your area.
2. Create and distribute signs that identify wild plants and flowers on a local nature trail.
3. Create a directory of local, state and national nature trails where wildflowers can be found. Include Web sites where girls can view trails outside their area. Distribute this information to other troops.
4. Volunteer to work with an organization that is involved with the protection of wild plants or help turn a vacant lot or small public space into a wildflower garden.

## Career Exploration

1. What is a Botanist and who would employ someone with this educational background? Investigate which colleges offer programs in botany. What are admission and basic course requirements?
2. Visit a local botanical garden or conservatory. Find out what education and experience is needed to apply for employment. Also find out how many people are employed to care for the gardens and the various job descriptions.

3. The forest was America's first pharmacy. It has long played a role in medicine and is today a very important source for new drugs. Native Americans used wild plants to treat all kinds of ailments. Find out the healthful properties of five plants. Visit a pharmacy or health food store for information on drugs and herbal remedies made from wild plants. Are there government regulations on the harvesting of wild plants used for medical purposes?

4. Visit a local garden center or nursery and ask the sales person to direct you to the perennial section. Ask what perennials are and if they have family members that grow in the wild. Find out how the garden center selects and starts its perennial plants. Do they grow the plants from seed, root stock or cuttings? Do the young plants have to be transplanted? How much care do perennials require?