



Drawing Plants

Background Info:

Scientists have used drawings to better understand living things for centuries. Early botany relied heavily on field drawings, and even today, many important field guides like Sibley's Guide to Birds use drawings – not photographs to depict their subjects. The very act of drawing helps us to notice the design of a thing, as we must focus on the details of the object in order to reproduce it.

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils
- Colored pencils or crayons

Activity:

1. In an outdoor setting that's likely to have some interesting plants, provide each child with paper and drawing utensils.
2. Tell the children to find a plant and to look at it as closely as possible. Notice its color and shape.
3. Then, ask the children to close their eyes and try to reconstruct the plant in their mind. Picture the plant as if it were outlined against the sky.
4. Ask the children to open their eyes and then, using pencil, try to draw the outline of the plant. Sometimes it helps to look at the plant, and not at the paper, when you are drawing.
5. Ask the children to fill in some of the details, now that they have the outline done. They might add some color, veins on the leaves, flowers, tiny hairs of the stem, maybe a pollinator that is visiting the flower, etc.
6. Ask the children if they feel like they will now be able to recognize that plant when they see it again. Encourage them to invent their own name for it if they don't know its real name!

GRASS RIVER
NATURAL AREA

