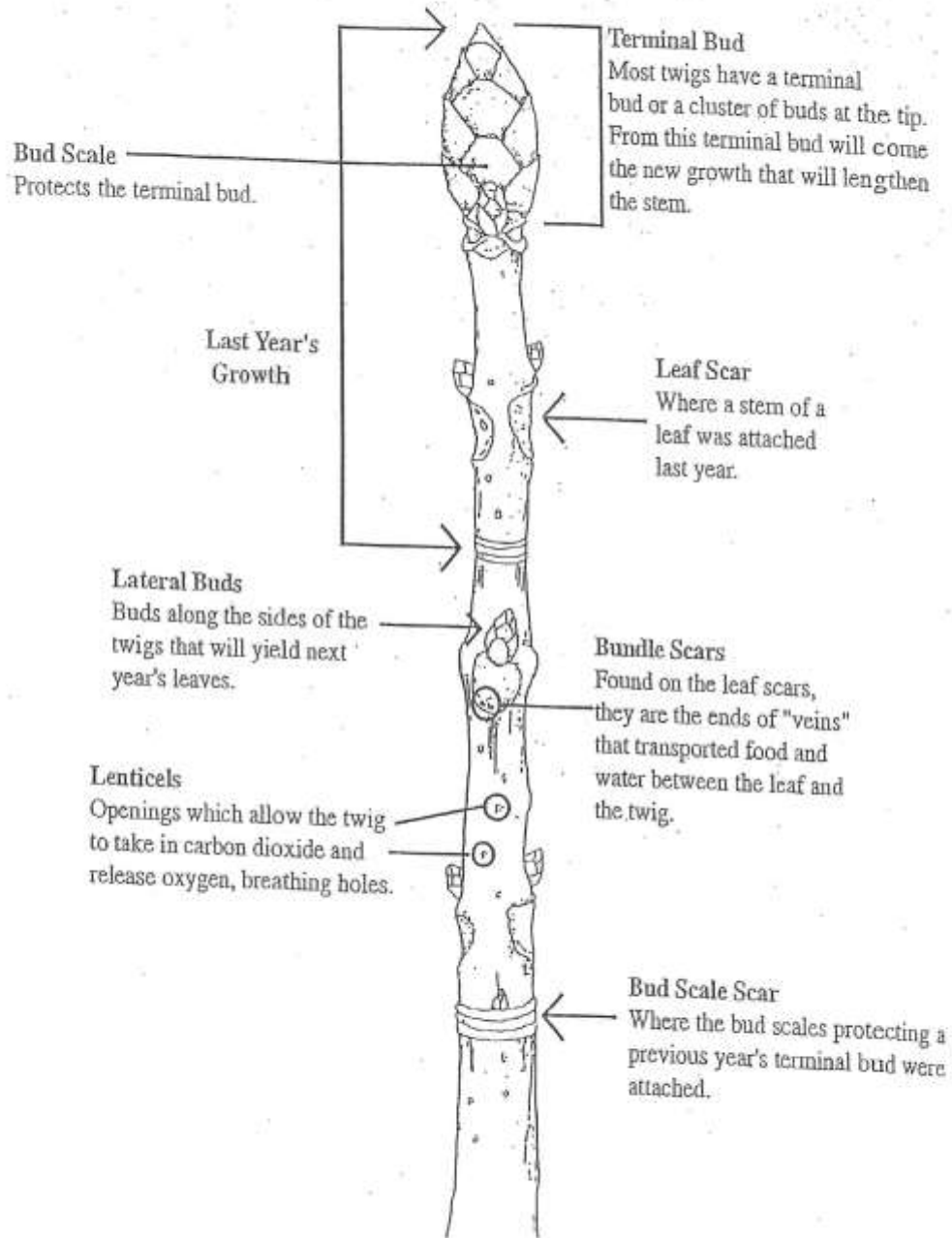


Grade 8 Curriculum Link Ideas

Subject	Unit	Season	Activity	Description
Language Arts	Expository Writing	Any	Nature Writers	Read students a passage from a nature writer e.g. John Muir or David Henry Thoreau. Have them sit in a spot and write about their surroundings in a similar fashion. Share writings to wrap-up.
	Poetry, group communication	Any	Group Poem	Have students work in groups of 8-10. Each group picks a subject (e.g. a tree) in the schoolyard and every person contributes a word/short phrase that is then combined into a group poem, performed to the rest of the class.
	Descriptive Writing	Any	Nature Area Guides	Have students create a guide with descriptions and illustrations for the natural area.
Science	Cells and Systems	Fall/spring	Plant cell structures	Have students collect a variety of samples of different plant parts from different plants and look at these under a microscope. Discuss the differences in the cellular structure of different leaves – how might tropical leaves be different?
	Twig Study	Fall, winter, early spring	Plant structure	Have students use a magnifier to look at buds, bud scales, leaf scars, growth rings, lenticels and basal leaves. Learn to ID plants by these structures – see twig ID sheet below.
	Freshwater/Saltwater	Any	Watershed Study	Have students learn about their local watershed. Have them go out to the schoolyard and assess possible sources of contamination to the watershed – how can the schoolyard contribute to watershed health and decrease pressure on water systems?
	Freshwater/Saltwater	Any	River Project	Draw out a section of the Bow River on poster paper/roll of paper. Cut it up and give partners a section each. Each pair will develop their section with a personal residence. Once the sections are developed piece the river back together and discuss how development on one plot will affect that on other plots.
	Light and optics	Sunny day	Nature of light	Bring out bins into schoolyard and fill them with water and additives like salt or sand etc. Observe how the light moves through these different bins.
Socials	Worldviews	Any	Worldviews and gardens	Divide the class into groups with different worldviews – e.g. Spanish and Aztecs. Have groups design a garden for the schoolyard based on that worldview, designing elements that would represent their values as a culture.

Art	Positive/Negative Space	Any	Small Picture/Big Picture	Discuss natural objects (flowers, leaves, rocks, etc.) in context of their environment (the bigger picture). Explain positive and negative space. Divide page in half. In the top half sketch the object (positive space). Leave the surrounding space white (negative space). In the bottom half draw an outline of the object (negative space inside). Draw the environment around the object (positive space). Wrap-up: share drawings and discuss small elements of nature in context of the environment. *Variation: use different perspectives such as close away, magnified/naked eye
	Scale drawings	Any	Schoolyard Maps	Students do a scale map of schoolyard and can add elements as if they were landscape architects.
Wellness	Physical movement	Any	Schoolyard movements	Students design an obstacle course/ adventure race in the schoolyard that includes different movements including balance, jumps, strength etc.
	Mental/emotional wellness	Any	Nature benefits	Students divide the schoolyard into sections such as bare, few plantings, moderate plantings, many plantings. They then design short tests to determine the effect of spending time in these areas such as measuring heart rate, mental retention, emotional feelings etc.
Math	Patterns	Any	Fibonacci	Explain the Fibonacci numbers and then try to find examples of it in nature – tree branching or cones. What other patterns can we find in nature?
	Math Problems	Any but better when warmer	Math Trail	Have students make groups of 3-5. Have students create math problems using natural items e.g. what how many of x tree could fit in the space of y tree?

Twig Illustration



Prepared by Melissa Sikes for SNAP, Goodwin Conservation Center, Hampton CT
Adapted from worksheets put out by Environmental Action Coalition