

Walking Land: Making Plant Relatives



Activity Purpose

Since time immemorial, Native and Indigenous peoples have learned about the world through our relationships. One way to make relationships is by paying close attention. This activity involves building relationships with plant relatives by going on a walk.



Activity Overview

- ◇ Go on a walk (it can be in your neighborhood, at a park, your yard, or any place with plant life). As you walk, talk about the place you're in. What do you notice?
- ◇ Stop to perceive plant life that you notice. What are some interesting details that you notice about the plant? Consider how the plant smells and what colors you see. Do you know things about this plant and how it relates to other plants, humans and other animals? What else is near the plant?
- ◇ You can use the blank relatives template to draw connections and track what you learn about.

Roles, Relations, Responsibilities & Gifts

- ◇ Why might we use the term "plant relative"? What does it say about plants? About us?
- ◇ What role does this plant play in this place? What is our role in this place? How are these roles related? How do we know?
- ◇ Consider your responsibilities to this place. How can humans help or harm plant relatives? What decisions can you make each day to be a good relative to plants?
- ◇ Consider the web of relationships that this plant is part of. How are we, our ancestors and future generations connected to that web?
- ◇ What gifts does this plant offer? And what gifts can we offer in return?

Learning Across Generations & with Other Families

- ◇ Take time to hear the ideas from everyone in your family. What do you learn from each other? What are the different perspectives the youngest children bring? And the oldest?
- ◇ Check in with community members and physically distant relatives. Share what you've learned and ask what they know, or what they've been learning about.

Supporting Learning & Wellbeing

- ◇ Start the walk by talking about big ideas. Ask family members to share what they know about plants or what memories they have with plants. Once the walk is finished, discuss what you learned and revisit the big ideas. Bookending the walk in this way can make the big ideas come through more clearly.
- ◇ Pay attention to patterns. We learn from land by paying close attention to the patterns that exist.
- ◇ Do you see particular plants growing in certain areas? Near other plants? Near water? In lots of sun or in the shade? Why is this?
- ◇ Big wondering questions make for better learning opportunities than known-answer questions.
- ◇ Questions you don't know the answer to are great learning opportunities! Discuss different possibilities, talk with friends and family or look to other resources to learn more.

Making Connections with Stories

- ◇ Are there stories that your tribe has about certain plants? Is there a special memory that you or your family have with a certain plant? Ask your Elders what stories they may have about different plants.
- ◇ Get creative and make your own story about this place or about a certain plant.
- ◇ Ask children to consider what stories they will tell of this time and place when they are Elders.

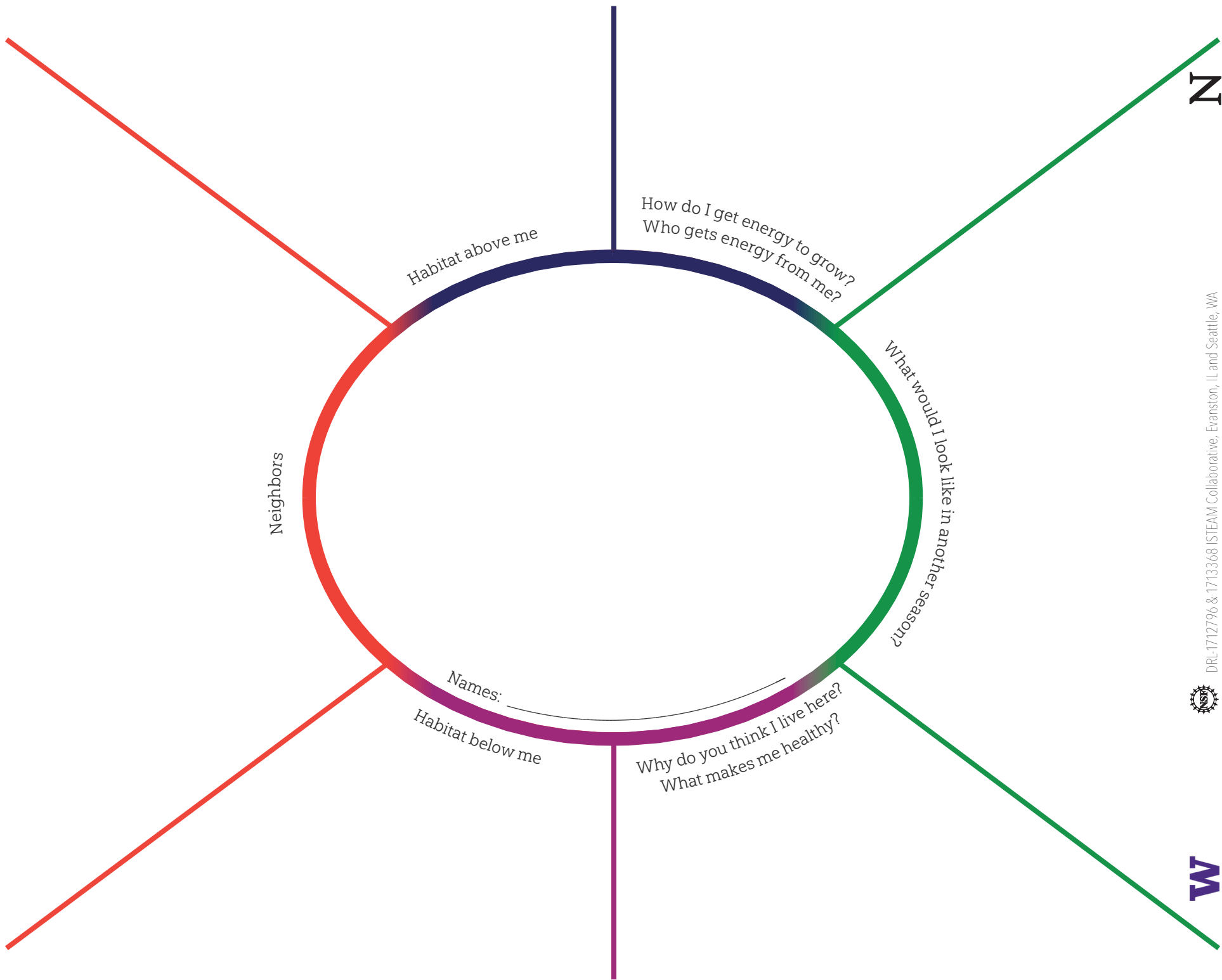
Making Relations with Lands & Waters

- ◇ If you are in a new place, learn which tribal nation communities are nearby or have homelands in this place.
- ◇ Consider what this place was like a long time ago. What may it be like one hundred years from now?
- ◇ You might revisit the same plant(s) or tree(s) multiple times. See the Nurturing Relations With Plant Relatives activity for more information on revisiting a plant relative.

Decolonization, Resurgence & Good Relations

We have always learned through walking land with family and community. Getting to know plant relatives continues these traditions and leads us towards a better future.

Some humans have made decisions that have made it harder to be in good relations with plants. What decisions can we make to nurture healthy relationships with plants?



A Closer Look

<u>Leaf</u>	<u>Bark/Stalk</u>	<u>Seed/Cone/Flower</u>
<u>New Growth</u>	<u>Adult Plant</u>	<u>Life Cycle</u>

N

DRL-1712796 & 1713368 ISTEAM Collaborative, Evanston, IL and Seattle, WA



W