

Walking Land: Nurturing Relationships with Plant Relatives



Activity Purpose

Since time immemorial, Native and Indigenous people have learned about the world through our relationships. This activity involves revisiting a plant relative and strengthening your relationship with it.



Activity Overview

- ◇ Go on a walk to visit a particular plant that you have visited before. This might be a plant you learned about from the Making Plant Relatives activity or any other plant that you know about. It doesn't matter if it's your second time visiting or the hundredth time. The more time you spend with a plant relative the better!
- ◇ Visit with the plant relative, you may share tobacco, water or a story. Is anything different since the last time you were here? Do you notice anything that you didn't notice last time?
- ◇ You might add to the blank relatives template as you learn more and more about the plant relative over time.

Roles, Relations, Responsibilities & Gifts

- ◇ Think of your visit with this plant the same way you would visit an old friend or a family member. Visiting supports healthy relationships with plant and human relatives alike. You can talk with the plant about what you notice, or listen and consider what the plant is noticing.
- ◇ As you pay attention to plants over time, you get to know them better. You might feel a new sense of care, responsibility, or gratitude as you learn more about a particular plant relative.
- ◇ What is this plant's role in the surrounding ecosystem? Does that role change over time?
 - ◇ An oak tree might provide shade for undergrowth in the summer, but have a different role in the fall.
 - ◇ How might the plant change or have different roles as it grows older?
- ◇ Does the plant have certain gifts to offer that it might not have had, or we didn't notice last time? 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. Tell them about your plant relative and ask if they have any plant relatives they'd like to tell you about.

Supporting Learning & Wellbeing

- ◇ It can be helpful to start the walk by talking about big ideas. Talk about what your last visit was like and discuss what you expect during this visit. 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. You might notice more of these patterns as you visit the same plant over time.
- ◇ As you revisit a plant over time, you might notice different details. Zoom in and pay attention to smaller details. Zoom out and pay attention to what's around, below, or above the plant.

Making Connections with Stories

- ◇ Make connections to tribal, family and personal stories. Ask your elders if they have a special relationship with a particular plant.
- ◇ Tell the story of your relationship with this plant. Think of your role as a storyteller and what teachings and knowledge you can pass on to others.

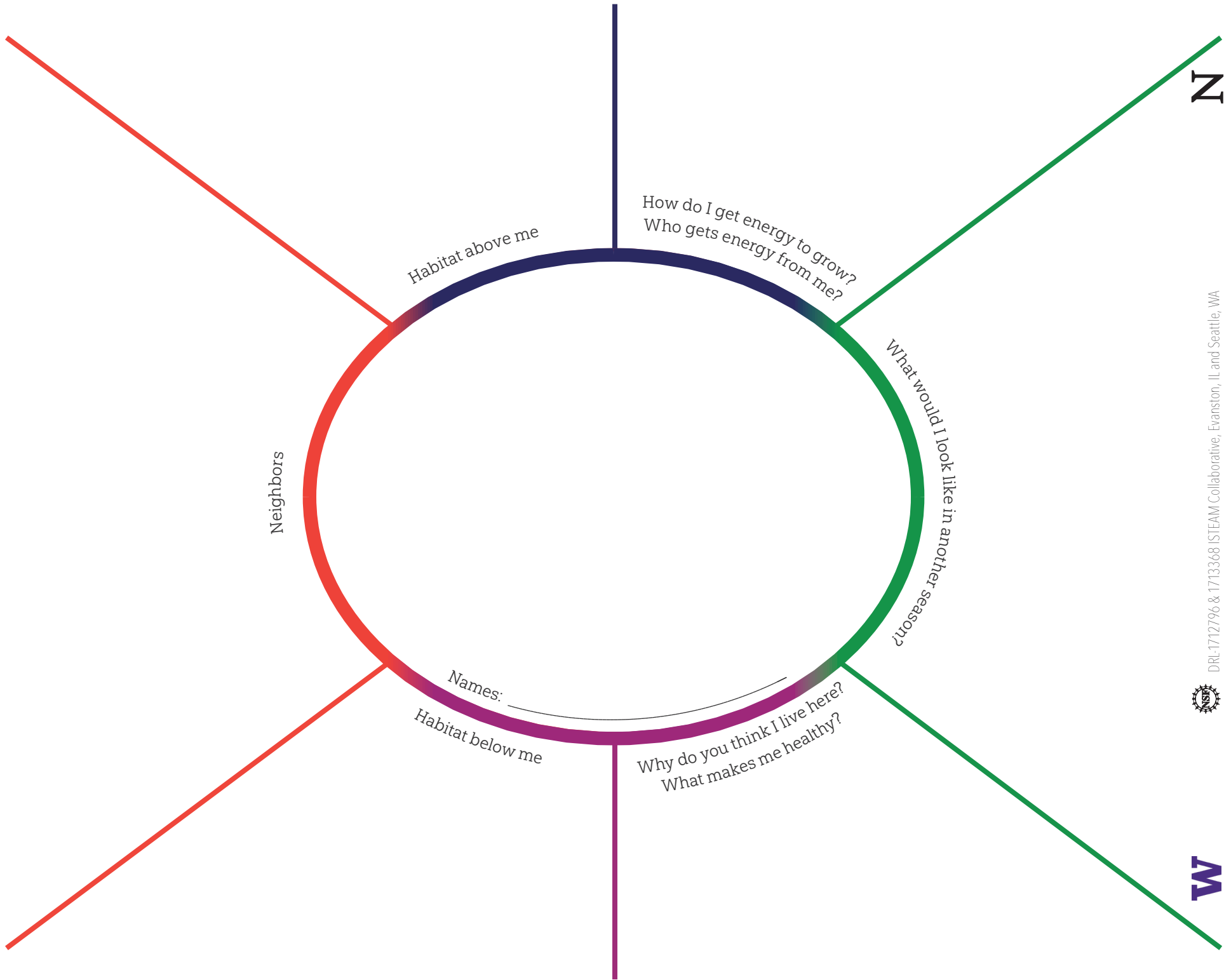
Making Relations with Lands & Waters

- ◇ Consider what this place was like a long time ago. What may it be like one hundred years from now?
- ◇ Consider ways that you can strengthen relations with your plant relative. What can you do each day to help the plant grow and thrive?
- ◇ Take the perspective of your plant relative. What are the experiences of this plant over time? Is the plant happy to have you visit?

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>

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