

Surcee Farm

a farm of unexpected surprises

A therapeutic environment,
of plants & animals,
for all in need



Therapeutic Horticulture Activity Sensory Exploration with Fresh Cuttings

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Overview: Exploring various characteristics of plants as related to sight, smell, and taste.

Precautions:

1. Sensory sensitivities to touch, smell, taste

Completion Time: 45 minutes

Materials: (10 participants)

1. Cuttings from various plants with notable sensory characteristics. (see list below for possible choices)
2. Brown lunch bags (number to match each variety of plant cuttings)
3. List of descriptive words for visual, olfactory, and tactile senses. (optional) (see below for examples)
4. Marker (1) (optional)
5. Paper or white board (optional)
6. Pens (10), pencil (10) or white board marker (1)
7. Cups (optional) (10)
8. Pitcher of water (optional) (1)

Pre-Session Prep:

1. Make cuttings of plant material
2. Set separate tasting cuttings aside
3. Number each brown bag with one bag/number for each plant cutting.
4. Place each plant into a brown bag
5. Put tasting cuttings in separate bag
6. Print off descriptive word lists
7. Collect pens and paper if that is going to be used during discussion

Step-By-Step Process/Instructions:

1. Talk with participants about using senses in the garden and with each plant they encounter.
2. Start with each participant exploring a bag through touch without looking at it; record impressions/descriptions, either each person on paper or on white board for the entire group.
3. Explore the same bags as in step 2 by smelling and recording impressions.
4. Explore each plant sample through visual exploration by taking the plants out of the bag and talking about what they look like.
5. Remove plants from the bag one by one; discuss the names of each plant.
6. Remove all plants from the area so they do not get mixed up with the next step.
7. Present tasting cuttings; discuss possible likes/dislikes; taste as desired and record impressions.
8. Offer water between tastings as desired.

Tips:

1. Possible Plants Choices for Cuttings:
 - Mint (smell, taste)
 - Basil (smell, taste)
 - Rosemary (smell, taste)
 - Oregano (smell, taste)
 - Thyme (smell, taste)

- Lemon Thyme (smell, taste)
- Lemon Balm (smell, taste)
- Lavender (smell)
- Kale (taste)
- Honeysuckle (smell, taste)
- Parsley (smell, taste)
- Cilantro (smell, taste)
- Fragrant flowers in bloom (smell) check for poisonous status
- Azalea leaves (touch) **POISONOUS** do not taste
- Hosta leaves (touch)
- Lamb's ear (touch)
- Non-fragrant flowers in bloom (sight) check for poisonous status

2. Potentially **POISONOUS** Plants

To see pictures of these potentially poisonous plants ,
visit [www. ncpoisoncenter.org](http://www.ncpoisoncenter.org)

CAUTION: Not every poisonous plant is listed

*These plants are also poisonous to touch.

Indoor

- Amaryllis
- Caladium
- Dumbcane/
- Dieffenbachia
- English Ivy
- Peace Lily
- Philodendron
- Pothos/Devil's Ivy

Outdoor

- Azalea
- Belladonna
- Black Locust
- Boxwood
- Caladium
- Capsicum
- Castor Bean

- Chinaberry
- Chrysanthemum
- Crocus
- Crown-of-Thorns
- Daffodil
- Euonymus
- Four O'Clock
- Foxglove
- Fruit pits/Seeds
- Gladiola
- Holly
- Hyacinth
- Hydrangea
- Iris/Flags
- Jerusalem Cherry
- Jimsonweed
- Jonquil

- Lily of the Valley
- Lobelia
- Morning Glory
- Mountain Laurel
- Narcissus
- Nephthytis/Arrowhead
- Nightshade Family
- Oak (acorns)
- Oleander
- Peony

- Podophyllum
- *Poison Ivy/Oak/Sumac
- Pokeweed/Pokeberry
- Privet
- Rhododendron
- Tobacco/Wild Tobacco
- Water Hemlock
- Wisteria
- Yew

3. Common Non Poisonous Plants

Outdoor

- Camellia
- Crepe Myrtle
- Dandelion
- Dogwood
- Easter Lily
- Forsythia
- Honeysuckle
- Hoya
- Impatiens
- Lavender
- Lilac
- Magnolia
- Monkey Grass
- Mulberry (ripe berries)
- Nandina
- Pyracantha/Firethorn
- Rose
- Tulip
- Wild Strawberry

Indoor

- African Violet
- Christmas Cactus
- Corn Plant
- Dracaena
- Ferns
- Ficus/Rubber Tree
- Fuchsia
- Geranium
- Jade Plant
- Norfolk Pine
- Peperomia
- Petunia
- Poinsettia
- Prayer Plant
- Schefflera
- Spider Plant
- Swedish Ivy
- Wandering Jew
- Wax Plant
- Zebra Plant

Taste Descriptive Words

Sweet

Tart

Piney

Lemony

Sour

Minty

Soapy

Visual Descriptive Words

Bright

Pointy

Soft

Rounded

Olfactory Descriptive Words

Minty

Piney

Fresh

Sweet

Stinky

Lemony

Tactile Descriptive Words

cold	hot	silky
cool	knobbed	slimy
crisp	knotted	slippery
damp	leathery	smooth
dry	limp	soft
dull	lumpy	spongy
elastic	moist	sticky
feathery	oily	tacky
firm	pebbly	tender
fishy	prickly	textured
fleshy	puffy	thick
fragile	pulpy	thin
furry	ribbed	tough
fuzzy	rough	velvety
gnarled	rubbery	warm
gritty	sandy	waxy
hairy	satiny	wet
hard	sharp	wooly

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