

"Who Am I ?" Freshwater Plant Puzzle Activity

Answer Key



Purpose: Students will be able to identify characteristics of native and invasive plants, as well as their habitats.

Step 1 Matching Plant Terminology

Place the correct letter next to the word that best describes/defines the word. This can be done by individuals, small groups or as a problem solving activity for the class.

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|------------------------------------|--|
| H 1. emersed plants | A. Plants that were here before the time of Christopher Columbus |
| E 2. submersed plants | B. Plants that live in, on or near the water |
| F 3. floating-leaved plants | C. Plants that are not attached to the sediments and float |
| C 4. free floating plants | D. Plants that live on dry land |
| B 5. aquatic plants | E. Plants that grow primarily below the surface of the water |
| D 6. terrestrial plants | F. Plants with leaves that float on the surface of the water |
| A 7. native plants | G. Non-native plants that cause environmental or ecological harm |
| G 8. invasive plants | H. Plants that grow out of the water; they are rooted to the bottom but their stems, leaves and flowers are above the water. |

Step 2 Put the Freshwater Plants Puzzle together.

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UE SSS: SC.A.1.2, SC.F.1.2, SC.G.1.2, SC.H.3.2, SC.H.1.2

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Step 3 "Who Am I ?"

Directions: Using the Freshwater Plants puzzle, the teacher will read the plant description only (not the name of the plant). In order to identify the plant, the class is allowed to ask questions about each plant; teachers may answer only with a "yes" or "no."

Plant Descriptions (for the teacher to read aloud)

Star-rush: I am a sedge that has white star shaped leaf blades. I can grow two feet tall and grow near the water. (*Note: sedges have solid stems that are often triangular.*)

Water hyacinth: I am an extremely invasive floating plant that can jam rivers and lakes. I have a purple flower that many people find attractive.

Tape Grass: I am a native submersed plant that is common in still or fast flowing waters. My leaves are only one inch wide and can be several feet long. Snails love to eat the algae that live on my leaves and I provide excellent fish and turtle habitat.

Cat-tail: I am one of the most common native plants found in wetland and aquatic habitats. I have long, brown cylindrical flower spikes and provide protective covers and nesting habitat for many animals.

Hydrilla: I am a non-native submersed plant. Because I can grow in low light conditions, it's easy for me to crowd out all the native plants and take over a lake. This makes me an extremely invasive plant. My stems are slender, branched and grow up to 25 feet long. My leaves grow in whorls of four to eight around the stem.

Marsh beggartick: I'm a native plant that grows near the water; I'm easy to see thanks to my bright yellow flowers. My seeds stick to clothing, fur and feathers.

American lotus: I am an emersed plant with circular leaves that float on the surface. My yellow flowers are on a stiff stalk.

Water lettuce: I am a floating plant. I occasionally form a dense mat and resemble an open head of a common vegetable. My leaves are light green and ridged.

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