

First Grade Education Program at Rotary Gardens: Spring

Approximately 60 students per session, divided into groups of 15.

Morning session: 9am to 11am
Afternoon session: 12:30pm to 2:30pm

The first grade program has been designed so that it would be simple enough so anyone would feel comfortable being a volunteer and so the participants will have an enjoyable time at Rotary Gardens.

The 8 objectives of the Janesville school district have been incorporated into the curriculum.

The program is composed of four units:

1. 45 minute guided walk of the gardens observing colors, shapes, and textures in the environment.
2. 20 minute flower making art project
3. 5 minutes at 4 learning stations that demonstrate (20 minutes total)
4. Plant parts (Stems, Roots, Leaves, Flowers)
5. Plant lifecycles
6. Things we use plants for
7. Parts of the plant we eat
8. 5 to 15 minute 'grand finale' where the participants pretend to be seeds and grow with the help of the sun,

water, air, nutrient.

Upon arrival, students are divided into 4 groups of approximately 15 students. A volunteer is needed for each group. With 60 kids, two groups tour the gardens while the other two groups do inside activities. The groups switch indoors to outdoors (and vice versa) after 45 minutes.

Schedule

(approximate times)

9am: Greet students, divide into groups.

9:20, switch indoor groups

9:45, switch outdoor and indoor groups.

10:25, switch indoor groups

10:45, move all students to reception garden for finale.

12:30pm: Greet students, divide into groups.

12:50, switch indoor groups

1:20, switch outdoor and indoor groups.

1:50 , switch indoor groups

2:15, move all students to reception garden for finale.

Part 1: Shape, Color, Texture Tour of Gardens

APPROX. TIME 45 minutes

The gardens change constantly, so there is no right or wrong way to guide the children. Different people see different things at different times and that is ok. The basic idea is to get the kids to be observant.

Help them to see that all plants come in many different colors, shapes and textures.

The following is just one suggestion. You should have a texture board and some grass seed with you.

Stand near the information board at the entrance of the Reception Garden. Ask the children if they can find any trees or plants that look like a circle, triangle, square, or rectangle. Also, have them see how many colors they can find. In May, the Tulips and Pansies are good examples of color.

Enter the Reception Garden. Have them feel the soft fabric on the board. Ask them to find some leaves on a plant that feel as soft as the fabric. The Lambs Ears are located in the corners of the raised beds by the north entrance.

Proceed to the Scottish Garden. Point

out that the soil on one side is dark and rich in nutrients and that most plants need that kind of soil. If they turn around, they will see small plants growing in sand and stones.

Those plants can get by with fewer nutrients. At the top of that bed are some bushes with very straight branches. When they turn around, they will see the Contorted Filbert with all crooked branches.

Proceed through the Color Rooms. By the end of May there's not a lot of color except in the foliage.

In the arboretum, have the kids feel the textures of the bark on several trees. Have them feel the pine needles and explain that they are really the trees leaves. On the north edge of the arboretum are 2 Hawthorne trees with long thornes. The tree has grown them to keep birds from taking all



their seeds.

Have the kids run to the fence. Tell them a little about the prairie across the road. The roots on the grasses are very long and deep. There are no trees on the prairie. It is burned every 3-5 years in order to kill insects, disease, and dead grass.

Heading toward the pond, they'll see a Prickly Pear Cactus. Not many cactus grow in Wisconsin. The thorns protect the plant from being eaten by animals.

Walk along the pond edge. The plants growing there are all native to Wisconsin. Ask if they know what the Wisconsin state flower is. (Violet)

Let the kids go on the pier. It's a good place to take pictures.

Proceed across the zig zag bridge into the Japanese Gardens. If you choose, tell them the legend about the evil spirits not being able to catch them if they go on a crooked path. In the Japanese Gardens, there's a Paper Birch. Have them feel the texture of the bark.

When they enter the Formal Gardens, ask them if they know how seeds travel or get from one place to another. Explain that they travel by wind, gravity, water, animals, birds, and people. Give them some grass seeds to plant in the sparse areas.

End up at the fish pond for a few minutes before taking them inside to do the indoor activities.

Alternate tours and ideas included at



the end of this document.

Part 2: Flower Making Project

APPROX. TIME 20 minutes

You can't do this project wrong! Each volunteer has their own special flower that can be made. Glue not necessary.

Materials needed

- Scissors
- Pencils or crayons
- Colored construction paper (halved)
- Colored Tissue paper (quartered)
- Colored pipe cleaner (halved)
- Paper punch
- Stapler
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Part 3: Education Tables

APPROX. TIME 20 minutes

This section is the most intimidating to volunteers as it requires a bit of memorization. Once you find your rhythm, this is section is the most fun of them all! Encourage students interaction by asking lots of questions and involving them in activities at each table.

Plant parts (Stems, Roots, Leaves, Flowers)

Materials: living plant, barerooted, watering can, soil, fertilizer. Address “what do plants need” (Light, Air, Water, Nutrients)

Plant lifecycles

Materials: Germinating seeds, felt-board activity. Activity– first the volunteer discusses germination. Students then take part in activity.

Things we use plants for

Materials: Cloth material, toothpaste, mint plant, candy, sugar, perfume, cigarettes, lumber, etc. Activity— involve students by asking “what’s this?” questions.

Parts of the plant we eat

Materials: Fruit and vegetable basket
Activity— assign fruit or vegetable to each student. Ask for plants where we eat the root, stem, leaf, flower, seed, fruit (remember! A fruit is any fleshy part of the plant that contains seeds. Tomatoes, squash, and peas in the pod are technically fruit.)

Part 4: Review: LAWN

APPROX. TIME 5 to 15 minutes

All students come together in Reception Garden (or large area) to participate in the interactive review session. Students pretend they are seeds and physically interpret the germination process and review what plants need to grow.

Creative Ideas and Alternatives

The power of this particular program is that each volunteer can personalize their section. The following ideas have proved successful to volunteers:

L*A*W*N Rap

Lindi Paull: Complete with hand gestures, students memorize “What Plants Need” in a simple song... *“Light, Air, Water, Nutrient... OH Yeah!”*

Tour Alternative

Color, Shape, Texture Tour of Rotary Gardens

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Start under dialogue. Sit students down for discussion.

“We will be focusing on three things on today’s

tour”

Color, Shape, Texture

Have students name colors they see in the garden.

Have students name shapes they see in the garden.

Ask students what is texture? Have them feel their faces (smooth). Ask them about their dad’s face if he doesn’t shave (rough).

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Move to reception garden.

Ask them if they own a pet. Ask if the pet has fuzzy ears. Have them feel the lambs ear and compare it their pet. Have them feel the rock. Is that smooth? (No, its rough!)

Move to druid statue (I’ve been calling her mother nature and she watches over the garden). Ask what is she holding? (a tree)

Ask the students if they know what RECYCLING is? What do they recycle at home? We recycle at Rotary Gardens... but we recycle building! The statue was once part of an old building that was torn down but we now use it in the garden. Same with the bricks and archways you see.

Ask students to look around at the flowers they see in the reception garden. Have them name the colors (white, blue). In the summer, the garden is full of white and blue flowers. It’s a special garden that we plant only in shades of whites and blues.

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Move to Scottish Garden.

Tell them that coming to RG is like visiting other countries. Has anyone been to another country?

Point out the buttercup. Ask what color the flowers are (yellow). Have them come up and



look at the flowers...

Point out the twisted filbert... ask them what shape are the branches (squiggly). Tell them to remember what the plant looks like.

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Move to the color rooms (stop under pergola). Tell them that the color rooms are not rooms like a classroom but a small garden area. Each room has plants with leaves, flowers, or stems of certain colors... they will have to guess what room they are in (no green room!)

Move to first room (stand on plaque to cover name). Have them guess the color of the room (It’s purple!) Expose the plaques and have them read it...

Move through the Yellow, White and Blue rooms the same way...

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Move into the arboretum to a spot where you can see a wide range of trees...

Form a big circle and ask them to look at a tall tree... have them pretend to be the tree!!

Have the students look at a tall evergreen tree... pretend to be that tree! How is it different?

Point out a small tree... pretend to be that tree, too.

(Continue as necessary...)

Ask the students to remember the twisted, squiggly tree from the Scottish garden. Pretend to be THAT tree!!!

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Have students regain focus on you. Ask them about the bark of a tree. What is it for? (It's like our skin, protection.) Tell them they will need to find a tree with smooth bark and rough bark. And, if they look hard, they may find a tree with SLIMEY bark! Have them run for a few minutes from tree to tree.

Pull them together and have them point to the smooth trees, rough trees, and the slimey tree (there is no slimey tree.)

Walk to spruce tree. Have them feel the needles (sharp, pointy). Walk to pine. Have them feel the needles (softer).

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Walk towards gazebo garden. Stop at cactus.



“Where do cactus grow?” (DESERT!)

We can also have cactus grow in Wisconsin. Some can survive our winters. This is a Teddy Bear Cactus... Instead of leaves it has needles. The stem is big and fat to store water. Plants can come in all shapes and sizes!!!

Move into Gazebo garden... sit students down. Ask the students if alligators live in Wisconsin. (no, duh) Ask if anyone has ever petted an alligator. The bark on the trees in the gazebo garden feel like alligator skin. Have students “pet” the trees and that’s what petting an alligator would feel like!

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Have the students form a line and follow you through the woodland path. “if you are quite, you may see a duck!” Gets’em every time!

Go to Pier... have them go out onto pier for a moment. Fish, ducks... good place for photo if parents/teacher has camera.

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Walk to zig-zag bridge. Ask “What shape is the bridge?” (Zig-zag!) go across bridge.

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By this point of the tour, my voice is shot. I tell the students to make a single line and follow me QUIETLY through the Japanese garden. I take the most meandering path that I can going across all the bridges. Have the students count the number of bridges they cross. I exit into the

rose garden. Sit students in center of rose crescents. Ask them how many bridges they crossed.

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In the rose garden, ask several students what was the favorite/coolest thing they saw on the tour (kills time!).

Talk about our fish.... They are called Koi. They are Chinese goldfish. Students can look at fish, but don't touch the water!!!

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After first tour, swap with indoor group. At end of second tour, take students to reception garden for finale