



# Ethnobotany

Program Outline for AMS 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Graders

Making the connection between plants, people, and culture

- Part I: Power point presentation in the classroom: 30 minutes
- Part II: Hands-on Activities in the classroom: 2 hours
- Part III: Follow-up in-class lessons lead by AMS teachers
- Part IV: Field Trip to North Mountain Park co-staffed

## Part I: Power point Outline

- Plants provide vital ecological functions
- People have always relied upon plants as their main source of source of food, medicine, and fiber
- Prior to the rise of agriculture, hunter/gatherer cultures around the world developed a thorough knowledge of how to find, process, and use the plants in their local region
- Plants became domesticated in a variety of locations around the World starting 10,000 years ago
- The desire to obtain plants from around the world lead to exploration and colonization
- The development of the scientific methods lead to the discovery of many new uses of plants, along with new ways of growing and propagating them
- The relocation of plants out of their native habitat, coupled with the rise of plantation-style farming, has had both positive and negative consequences for people and the environment
- There is a renewed understanding of, and interest in, the importance of biodiversity and the need to protect indigenous plants and cultures
- Plant research continues to play a vital role in finding solutions to today's social and environmental problems



## Part II: Hands-on activities at AMS

- Determine the plant source for a variety of commonly used items
- Conduct an experiment to determine the nutritional value of specific plants
- Conduct an experiment to determine the strength of particular plant fibers
- Identify a variety of foods while determining where they were first domesticated

### Part III: Ideas for potential follow-up classroom activities

- Make a herbarium collection
- Use a plant key to identify local plants
- Test plants for nutrition, medicinal uses, fiber, insecticides, plant growth, dyes, floral arrangements, fragrances, etc.
- Develop a unique plant experiment
- Research several uses of a favorite plant
- Research famous plant researchers and explorers
- Save native seed and grow them
- Propagate native plants by cuttings, division, layering
- Look at current types of plant research and associated careers
- Look for heirloom varieties of veggies in the store and in seed catalogues
- Research drugs, cosmetics, and household cleaners made with plant extracts

### Part IV: Ideas for potential field activities at NMP

- Carefully sketch plants while learning to identify specific plant structures
- Identify specific plants that were used by local Shasta Indians
- Process specific plant that were used by local Shasta Indians
- Perform a service activity that enhances the Park's Ethnobotanical Trail



North Mountain Park Nature Center

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