

“Grow a Paper Water Lily” lesson plan

Duration: 15-30 minutes

Objectives:

- Students will identify and build connections with a native wildflower species found in the Ottawa area to gain a deeper appreciation for local nature
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the characteristics and uses of plants
- Students will create two- and three-dimensional works of art that express feelings and ideas inspired by personal experiences
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of composition, using principles of design to create art works on a theme or topic
- Students will investigate different design principles and how they compare to nature

Background:

Like humans, wildflowers come in all shapes, colours, and sizes. The white water lily (*Nymphaea odorata*) is no exception! This native aquatic plant floats on the surface of calm waters and blooms throughout the summer, with its flowers opening in the morning and closing in the late afternoon or on cloudy days. This activity will encourage students to identify, learn about, and connect with white water lilies, a native wildflower species found in the Ottawa area.

Materials:

- One “Grow a Paper Water Lily” handout per student
- Colouring utensils (green and yellow)
- Scissors
- Glue or tape

Procedure:

1. Ask the class, “Have you ever seen a white water lily?” This native species can most often be seen in July and August growing in slow-moving freshwater lakes, ponds, and streams. Their leaves float on the surface of the water while beautiful fragrant flowers blossom with many layers of white petals surrounding a bouquet of golden stamens. Blooming all summer, the flowers open in the morning and close in the late afternoon or on cloudy days. The stems and leaves of these aquatic plants also provide an important food source for local wildlife. Encourage students to keep an eye out for these native aquatic wildflowers when they are out exploring this summer!
2. Give each student a “Grow a Paper Water Lily” handout. Regardless of whether students have seen a white water lily in nature before, they will have the chance to create their own out of paper!
3. Have students colour the rectangle partially green (for the stem) and partially yellow (for the stamens) on BOTH sides of the paper as per the instructions on the handout. Then cut out the rectangle and cut a fringe along the yellow section by cutting each of the straight dashed lines.
4. Have students cut out each of the flowers outlined in black. Then glue or tape the open edges of each flower together to give each flower a three-dimensional cup-like shape.

5. Encourage students to roll their coloured rectangle (with the fringe) as tightly as they can into a cylinder-shaped stem and secure it with glue or tape.
6. Starting with the smallest flower (5 petals), slide it up the paper stem until it reaches the division between the yellow and green sections. Secure with glue if necessary.
7. Repeat Step 6 with the intermediate flower (6 petals) followed by the largest flower (7 petals), securing with glue if necessary.
8. Gently press the yellow fringe outwards to form the beautiful stamens and enjoy your paper white water lily! As a class, discuss how the artistic process parallels the development of a flower as it grows.

