

LIFE ON THE MURRAY RIVER

Level: 3 & 4

Activity: 2

Overview

Colin (Marra) Clark is an Elder and Bakindji man. Bakindji means 'river people' and Colin spent much of his life growing up and working near the river. Growing up on the banks of the river allowed Colin to learn about which native plants can be used for different purposes. During this activity, students will learn about traditional uses for various native Australian plants, identify some plants found in their local area and investigate their uses.

Resources

- Smartboard or projector
- Computer access for students
- Appendix A: *Versatile Vegetation* (One copy per student)

Activity

ENGAGE

Watch [Bush Food](#) as a whole class. Discuss:

- Which bush foods were mentioned?
- Which bush medicines were discussed?
- Why do you think it was important for these kids to have this experience?

EXPLORE

Give students a copy of Appendix A: *Versatile Vegetation*. Using computers, they will need to find some plants (not already mentioned in the video) that were traditionally used for food, medicine or other purposes and complete the table. The following pages from the Australian National Botanic Gardens website may be useful:

<https://www.anbg.gov.au/gardens/visiting/exploring/aboriginal-trail/index.html>

<https://www.anbg.gov.au/apu/index.html>

https://www.anbg.gov.au/gardens/education/programs/pdfs/aboriginal_plant_use_and_technology.pdf

EXPLAIN

As a whole class discuss:

- How would you describe the relationship between Aboriginal people and the environment?
- What are some plants that were traditionally used by Aboriginal Australians? What were they used for?
- How did people know which plants were edible or could be used for medicine? How was this knowledge passed along?
- What could be challenging about using plants for such a range of purposes? What are the advantages?

ELABORATE

Now challenge students to find out about three types of plants that are found in their own local environment, including possible uses, and complete the bottom section of Appendix A: *Versatile Vegetation*. [The Atlas of Living Australia](#) website might be useful here.

EVALUATE

Invite some students to share what they discovered about the plants in their local area. Discuss:

- Where does the food we eat come from? What about medicine/tools/clothing etc?
- Could we use any plants in our local area for another purpose?
- What would be the challenges/benefits?
- How would you describe our relationship with the environment today?

Curriculum Links



Level 3		
GEOGRAPHY	<u>Geographical Knowledge:</u> Diversity and significance of places and environments	Types of natural vegetation and the significance of vegetation to the environment, the importance of environments to animals and people, and different views on how they can be protected; the use and management of natural resources and waste, and different views on how to do this sustainably (VCGGK082)
HISTORY	<u>Historical Knowledge:</u> Community, remembrance and celebration	A significant example of change and a significant example of continuity over time in the local community, region or state/territory (VCHHK073)
Level 4		
GEOGRAPHY	<u>Geographical Knowledge:</u> Diversity and significance of places and environments	Types of natural vegetation and the significance of vegetation to the environment, the importance of environments to animals and people, and different views on how they can be protected; the use and management of natural resources and waste, and different views on how to do this sustainably (VCGGK082)
HISTORY	<u>Historical Knowledge:</u> Community, remembrance and celebration	A significant example of change and a significant example of continuity over time in the local community, region or state/territory (VCHHK073)

Sample Report Comments

{Name} has investigated traditional uses for plants. {He/she} is beginning to describe the relationship that different groups of people have with the land and discuss how this relationship has changed or remained the same over time.

References

Behind the News, 2013. *Bush Food*. [online video] Available at: <http://www.abc.net.au/btn/story/s3775984.htm> [Accessed 11 July 2018]

Australian National Botanic Gardens. *Aboriginal Plant Use*, <https://www.anbg.gov.au/gardens/visiting/exploring/aboriginal-trail/index.html> [viewed 11 July 2018]

Australian National Botanic Gardens. *Aboriginal Plant Use – NSW Southern Tablelands*, <https://www.anbg.gov.au/apu/index.html> [viewed 11 July 2018]

Australian National Botanic Gardens. *Aboriginal Plant Use and Technology*, https://www.anbg.gov.au/gardens/education/programs/pdfs/aboriginal_plant_use_and_technology.pdf [viewed 11 July 2018]

Australian National Botanic Gardens. *Aboriginal Plant Use and Technology*, <https://www.ala.org.au/> [viewed 11 July 2018]

