

There are Many Ways to Fight Weeds!

This activity is directly tied to the fourth spread, pages 7 and 8, in the *What's In Your World?* publication located inside the back pocket of the activity tool kit.

What do we do about weeds?

Without any natural enemies, noxious weeds can easily outcompete native plants and take over whole landscapes. These weeds are tough and don't give up easily. In this lesson students will learn about the many tools we use to stop the spread of noxious weeds. Students will also create skits to demonstrate integrated weed management and participate in a journaling activity to discover how they could be "Weed Warriors."



Levels

Grades 4-8

Subjects

Language Arts, Science, Performing Arts

Skills

Discussing, Demonstrating, Analyzing, Brainstorming

Concepts

Scientific investigation, interactions of living things and environments; connections of science, technology, society, and local landscapes

Objectives

Students will learn the term integrated weed management.

Students will explore the different techniques used to stop the spread of noxious weeds.

Students will investigate and discover ways they can contribute to noxious weed management.

Materials (20 student class-size)

What's in Your World? booklets (pp. 7-8) - 1 per student
noxious weed pamphlets *Why Should I Care?*
journals or notebook - 1 per student
pencil - 1 per student

Time Considerations

Preparation - 15 minutes
Activity - 70 minutes

Lesson Overview

- What About Weeds Skits (45 minutes)
- Weed Warrior Journaling Activity (25 minutes)

Background

Integrated Weed Management--the plan to beat weeds!

Without any natural enemies, noxious weeds can easily outcompete native plants and take over whole landscapes. These weeds are tough and don't give up easily.

So, many different tools are used to stop the spread of noxious weeds. Scientists call this "integrated weed management." This means that there is no one way to control weeds--we can stop them only by using many different tools. Stopping weeds is like stopping a wild-fire--when a forest burns, we respond by digging trenches in front of the fire.

Some weeds can be controlled by mowing them or pulling them out of the ground. But this is hard work, and some weeds have thorns or sap that can irritate your skin. We can weaken some of the weeds by spraying chemicals called "herbicides" on them. These chemicals soak into the plant and damage the roots, which is where weeds store their food. Sometimes fields are burned to get rid of weeds. Goats and sheep will eat some weeds, like leafy spurge. Some insects will eat weeds, too, and kids raise these insects at their school to later let them loose on weeds in the field. In most cases, it takes several methods to stop weeds in their tracks.

What About Weeds Skits

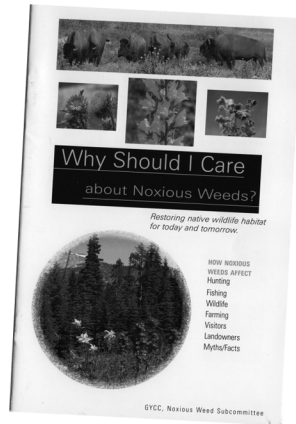
(60 minutes)

STEP ONE. Begin the activity by asking students--*what do we do about noxious weeds? How do we stop the spread of noxious weeds?* List ideas on the board.

STEP TWO. Now, ask the students to read pages 7-8 in their *What's in Your World?* booklets. After the students have finished reading, ask them if they have any more words or ideas about how to stop the spread of noxious weeds. Record them on the board.

STEP THREE. Break students into small groups, 3-4 students per group. Tell the students that their task is going to be to create a skit about how to stop the spread of noxious weeds. Assign one method to each group. Give the students 10-15 minutes to create a skit. Skits can be funny or serious, but they must be informative. Give students pamphlets on noxious weed management such as, *TIPS for fighting weeds on small acreages in Montana*, as a resource.

STEP FOUR. Once the groups have their skits prepared, ask each of the groups to present their skit. After each skit, ask for comments from the students watching the skit. What method did the group portray? How effective is the method?



Weed Warrior Journaling Activity

(60 minutes)

STEP ONE. Introduce the term “integrated weed management” to the students. Based on their skits, *are there ways to combine methods of weed management to be more effective on suppressing a weed?*

Discuss with students the reasoning for using multiple methods of stopping the spread of noxious weeds. Ask the students if they agree with this approach--*why or why not?* Also ask the students--*“How might their skits be combined to be more effective on suppressing a weed?”*

STEP TWO. In their journals, have students brainstorm at least 5 reasons why they should care about weeds. After everyone has at least 5 reasons, ask each student to share one of their reasons. *Should we care about noxious weeds? Why or why not?*

STEP THREE. Next, tell the students to imagine that they have become “Weed Warriors,” people who work to stop the spread of noxious weeds. *What are some things that they could do now in their own life to help prevent the spread of noxious weeds?* Ask the students to number a piece of paper from 1 to 10 and write at least ten different things they could do to be “Weed Warriors.”

STEP FOUR. Once students have finished, ask volunteers to share their ideas.

If they did one thing on their list today, how might that impact the spread of noxious weeds?

