

Spotted Knapweed Activities

Snout Beetles and Scientific Name
Play Audio Track #19
(15 minutes)

Levels
Grades 4-8

Subjects
Science, Language Arts

Skills
Examining, Interpreting, Translating, Explaining, Discussing

Concepts
Structure and functions of living things; interactions among technology, science and society

Objectives
Students will learn how to interpret scientific names of plants.

Materials (20 student class-size)
What's in Your World? CD audio track #19 (inside the back cover) - 1 per class
plant I.D. guides from the library - 4 or more
medicinal plant guides from the library - 4 or more
plants and industry guides from the library - 4
latin plant name meanings - 1 per student (located on the pages following Leafy Spurge Activity #10)

Time Considerations
Preparation - 15 minutes
Activity - 15 minutes

Lesson Overview
• Snout Beetles and Scientific Name (15 minutes)

Background
Swedish botanist and physician Carolus Linnaeus (1707 - 1778) attempted to describe the entire known natural world using scientific (Latin) names that are adopted all over the world today. He gave names to every mineral, vegetable, and animal known to him. Scientific Latin names are two-part. One is the genus and the other is species. For example, human beings are genus *Homo* and species *sapiens*. Human beings are then classified by Linnaeus as *Homo sapiens*.

Note that the first name, genus, begins with a capital letter, while the second with a small letter. Both words commonly appear in italics. The only exception is in print when the text content is in italics--in which case the Latin name is normalized to differentiate it from the text content.
Which Latin name do you recognize?

SNOUT BEETLES AND SCIENTIFIC NAME LESSON DETAILS

STEP ONE. Print copies of the "Latin Plant Name Meanings" list at the end of the Teacher Guide. Pass one copy of the list to each student. Explain that they have five minutes to review the list before they look them up in an official guide book.

STEP TWO. Break the students into 4 groups of 5 students each. Pass out the Plant I.D. guides you got from the library. Ask each group to share the responsibility to look up five plants on their list and read the description of the actual plant to each member in their group. Ask them to also read at least one description of a similar plant in the Genus with a different species name and describe exactly what is different between the two species. Ask the students--*Why are plant descriptions important? Why is the species name critical to scientists who make management decisions?* (many plants in the same genus look alike--some invasive plants that are declared illegal to grow have look-alike native plants)

STEP THREE. Ask the students--*Do you think you would want to know if the plant you think is a medicinal plant is really a poisonous cousin before you eat it? Explain.*

Pass out the other books you got from the library to the students. Ask the students to find one plant that is poisonous and describe it to the class.