

LESSON 12: WEED PULL PREPARATION

Duration: One 45-minute class period

Background information:

Most plants can be identified by common characteristics such as leaf shape and color. Monocots (plants with one emergent sprout leaf) have grass-like leaves, with veins running the vertical length. Dicots (plants with two sprout emergent leaves) have rounded leaves, with veins that are webbed from a central mid-vein. Typically, plants have characteristic roots as well. Grasses and other monocots usually have a fibrous root system. Broad-leafed dicots usually have either a tap root, or adventitious roots that trail just under the surface of the soil.

Many invasive plants can sprout and continue to grow if the top is chopped off or if a small fragment of root remains in the ground. As a result, invasive plant species are difficult to remove permanently.

Objectives:

- Practice field identification of exotic invasive species.
- Identify and tag exotic invasive species.

Prepare in advance:

- Locate an area within walking distance of the school grounds and arrange for students to perform a weed pull as a community service.
- Investigate the location you choose carefully, identifying exotic invasives in advance of your students' visit.
- Cut brightly colored crepe paper streamers or surveyor's tape into 12"-long pieces.
- Download [invasive species flash cards](http://www.se-eppc.org/pubs/cards.cfm) for students from the Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Council Web Site at <<http://www.se-eppc.org/pubs/cards.cfm>>
- Print flash cards corresponding to common, local invasives onto cardstock or regular paper and laminate for student use. Laminating the cards makes them weather and dirt resistant.

Materials:

- Lab/field notebooks
- Flash cards
- Crepe paper streamers

Description:

Students use their knowledge of exotic invasive plant and species descriptions from their field notebooks, Web quests, posters, and invasive species flash cards to identify and tag invasive species in a pre-selected area.

Instructional sequence:

(10 – 15 minutes)

- **Remind** students of outdoor safety rules (e.g., work with a buddy, do not leave the area, do not eat any plant or plant part, and report all injuries to the teacher.)
- **Solicit** suggestions from students on how to “spot” exotic invasives as you walk to the weed-pull location.
- **Direct** students to locate their “*Exotic Invasives in My Neighborhood*” sheet in their lab/field notebooks.
- **Encourage** recollection of exotic species that were more abundant.
- **Distribute** invasive species flash cards.
- **Lead** a short discussion recalling students’ experiences identifying exotic invasives on their walk (lesson 10).

(5 – 10 minutes)

- **Lead** students to an area you know has a good variety and number of invasive plants.
- **Model tagging an exotic invasive** by tying a crepe paper streamer around the stem or branch of a plant.

(10 – 20 minutes)

- **Instruct** students to identify and tag exotic invasive plants in the immediate area.
- **Help** students use information in their notebooks and images on the flash cards to identify exotic invasive plants.

Source: Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Council, *Invasive Species flash cards*, online at <<http://www.se-eppc.org/pubs/cards.cfm>>