

Plant Life Study Handout

Compare plant species around two lakes using the Water Atlas, guidebooks and a lake visit.

QUESTION: What types of plants can be found growing in and around your lake?

PLANT COLLECTION AND RESEARCH PROCEDURES:

1. Go to www.Seminole.WaterAtlas.org. Using the Water Resources Search tool, find your chosen lake. Visit the Habitat/Ecology tab to find out what kinds of plants have been reported around your lake? Look over the plants listed. Follow the links and view the descriptions and photos. Make a list with photos. Give credit for the information and print your list.
2. Go to the lake with your class. You will need your clipboard, pencil, field guide to plants, your list of plants and sketch paper.
3. Take 5 to 10 minutes to walk around the lake and observe the different types of plants growing in and around the water.
4. If possible, take pictures of unfamiliar plants that you want to identify.
5. Use your field guide to identify at least five different plant species.
6. For each species, make a sketch and record the name underneath the sketch.
7. Once you have all of your sketches and plants identified, return to the classroom.
8. If some plants remain unidentified, use field guides and the internet to identify them.
9. For your research you will need to answer the following questions about each plant:
 - a. What is the common name?
 - b. What is the scientific name?
 - c. What type of plant is it (aquatic, herbaceous, floating, tree, shrub, wildflower, woody, herbaceous, annual, perennial, evergreen, deciduous, etc.)
 - d. What does the plant look like? (tall, short, shrubby, creeping, climbing, with or without flowers, etc.)
 - e. Where would you most likely find this plant growing (natural community)?
 - f. Is the plant native to Florida?
 - g. Is the plant invasive?
 - h. Is the plant toxic to humans or animals?
 - i. Are there any uses for the plant?
10. Be sure to record the sources of your information as you discover it, and turn in a reference page listing these.
11. Plant research should be neatly organized and typed.
12. The teacher may ask for a copy of your research paper on disk.

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COMPARING AND CONTRASTING YOUR LAKE PLANTS WITH PLANTS OF OTHER LAKE SYSTEMS:

Now that you have done your research, it is time to compare your discoveries with other lake systems in Seminole county.

1. Have a copy of the plants you identified from Your Lake.
2. Go to www.Seminole.WaterAtlas.org and use the Advanced Water Resource Search to locate another lake that has a Plant Species Inventory.
3. Review the inventory list of plant species found at that water body. (If there is no data you will need to choose a different lake.)
4. If the plant name has a link beside it you can click on the link and it will bring up photos and additional information on the plant. Click on links to get information and photos.
5. Pick at least five plants to compare with the five you identified. The plants can be the same species.

CONCLUSION: Answer the following questions based on your research and what you find on the website.

1. How would you classify the majority of plants you identified? Trees, shrubs, wildflowers, aquatic plants?

2. Are a majority of the plants found around your lake native to Florida or not?

3. Are any of the plants you identified also found at the other lake? Explain.

4. Are a majority of the plants found at the other lake Florida natives or not?

5. Write a brief summary of the similarities and differences between the two lakes.
