

EXPLORE OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM. LEARN INSIDE OUR STATE.

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## Native Plants

### Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum

**Background:** Canyons of the Ancients National Monument has more than 6,000 recorded sites. Even if you are not planning to explore the monument, be sure to stop by the visitor center and museum, which includes several hand-on exhibits. Outside, the half-mile Escalante Trail leads you to Escalante Pueblo, a small village established in the mid-1100's.

Along the paved trail leading to Escalante Pueblo, visitors will find information signage about the history and natural environment. Native plants with informational signs can also be found along the path. Ancestral Puebloans and American Indians living in the area used plants for many different reasons including food, medicine, clothing, shelter, and tools.

#### Word Alert:

**Ethnobotany**—the study of an area's plants and their uses by a people

**Archaeologist**—a person who studies human history and prehistory by excavation of sites. They then analyze what they find.

**Excavate**—to uncover by digging

#### Questions to Ask:

1. What is a native plant? (*Plants that have existed in an area for many years, without humans planting them*)
2. What would the Native Americans use plants for? (*eating, medicine, clothing, building materials, decorative jewelry*)
3. How did the Native Americans know what plants to use for different reasons? (*stories handed down to them from elders, experimenting*)
4. How can historians and archaeologists tell what plants Native Americans used? (*When they excavate, they sometimes find pieces of clothing and other items. They study these. Also, sometimes the descendants still use the plants for the same reasons because the stories have been handed down to them*)

**Activity:** As you walk along the Escalante Trail, look for the information plant signs. Choose three native plants and complete the chart below. There are two activity options, one for kindergarten through 2nd grade, and another for 3rd through 5th grade.

**K-2<sup>nd</sup> Activity**

Write down the name of the plants you choose, draw a sketch of each and then write down an example of how the plant was used.

Plant name	Sketch	Use

### 3rd-5<sup>th</sup> Activity

Write down the name of the plants you choose, draw a sketch of each, write down an example of how the plant was used and share a modern replacement for the plant.

Plant	Sketch	Use	Modern replacement
<b>Extra Plant:</b>			
<b>Extra Plant:</b>			

Examples of plants you will see are: Yucca, Skunkbush Sumac, Indian Ricegrass, Gambel Oak, Mountain Mahogany, Serviceberry, Juniper, Prickly Pear Cactus, Piñon Pine, Sagebrush, Rabbitbrush, Fendlerbush

Answers will vary, but here is an example.

**K-2<sup>nd</sup>**

Plant	Sketch	Use
Juniper		Berries are edible, building material, firewood, berries for jewelry

**3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>**

Plant	Sketch	Use	Modern replacement
Yucca		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fruit</li> <li>● Paintbrush</li> <li>● Mats/blankets</li> <li>● Sandals</li> <li>● shampoo</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● berries</li> <li>● purchased paintbrush</li> <li>● wool, any other fabric</li> <li>● leather/plastic</li> <li>● purchased shampoo</li> </ul>