

Carnivorous Plants



Age Group

Grades 2-4

Duration

20 mins

Materials Needed

A device to look up and show images

Location

Indoor

Grade Standards

2 = Structures and Functions of Living Organisms

3 = Ecosystems; Structures and Functions of Living Organisms

4 = Ecosystems

Test their knowledge by acting out each movement and have them guess which plant it is or call out the plant name and have them act out the movement.

Objectives

Students will learn about plants that have evolved to be carnivorous and how they catch their prey.

Background

All plants use the process of photosynthesis to create their energy but they also receive nutrients through their roots in the soil in order to grow. A type of plant that has evolved to get its nutrients from animals and insects due to the soil they are growing in lacking the nutrients they need are called carnivorous plants. They have adapted different ways to catch and kill prey so they can access those nutrients.

Activity

After introducing your students to what a carnivorous plant is, go through the following plant examples and act out the ways they catch their prey. You can look up pictures of each plant and show them to your students to help them get a better idea of each plant's adaptations.

- Venus flytrap - grow only in North and South Carolina and trap insects by locking their leaves together with finger-like hairs on the edges whenever they sense an insect landing on them. While the bug is trapped, the plant slowly digests it. To mimic this plant, have your students hold the heels of their hands together and then snap their hands shut.
- Sundew - has sticky dew on their leaves that stick to their prey and then grow and roll over them to keep them stuck while they digest. To mimic this plant, have them stick their fingers to a piece of paper or just pretend to stick to a bug and then roll their fingers into a closed fist.
- Pitcher plant - is shaped like a cup or pitcher. When a bug falls into the pitcher, it cannot crawl back out due to the walls being slippery and gets digested by the plant. To mimic this plant, have them make a cup shape with their hands, wait for a bug to fall in, then drink from the cup.
- Bladderwort - lives in water and sucks prey into sack-like leaves. They use their leaves like a fishing net to suck the prey in very fast, then keeps them trapped while it digests. To mimic this plant, have them pretend that when a bug swims by, they open their mouth, suck in air really fast, then snap their mouth closed. They can pretend to munch the bug in their mouth if they choose but this plant, like the others, slowly digests their prey.