

SCHOOLYARD STEWARDSHIP

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weed collection scavenger hunt



Weeds in the Schoolyard and Outdoor Classroom

Weeds happen. Once an outdoor classroom or schoolyard landscape is created, it starts to provide a fertile living habitat. With new exposed soil it is easy for weeds to be introduced by the wind and by birds, seeds can even be tracked in on people's feet.

Our definition of a weed is culturally determined, a plant that we feel is out of place. Weeds often are robust plants, able to establish themselves in poor soil, with irregular water and sun conditions.

In the outdoor classroom we remove certain weeds to reduce competition and allow a diversity of plants that have specific educational uses to flourish.

If weeds are removed on an ongoing basis, the process is easy. Best to remove weeds before the seeds mature.

If weeding is neglected for months at a time, weeds will become more permanent inhabitants of the outdoor classroom as seeds are dispersed, and roots spread these plants underground.

schoolyard hint

a five-minute a one-weed scavenger hunt

- 1) identify one particular weed with a group of students, point out special structure & features, ask students to observe and compare two examples, make a display board
- 2) discuss how to carefully pull the weed out to loosen and remove all of the roots, then shake off extra soil that clings to roots
- 3) seek out weeds and collect, make a class weed pile. Observe these plants, examine:
 - the longest root, tallest stem, leaf details
 - interconnection of plant roots below ground
 - look for seeds, count seeds
 - does this weed grow in different ways in different locations? Why?
 - weigh your weeds, compare root to stem
 - sketch and write about the weed, start a Weed Journal, display on a bulletin board, press weeks for display, and collection
 - dispose of weeds (discuss the best method)