



Plants that Survive!

Springtime in Wyoming can bring a confusing mix of warm, sunny days, and freezing snowstorms. Even plants get a little confused and some begin growing before the snow stops flying. In this activity, we're going to learn about the different structures that help plants grow successfully here in Wyoming before heading outside to look for some newly sprouting plants.

In this activity, your family will:

- Explore your yard, a park, or any other area where different plants grow
- Observe plants, their structures, and how they grow

Materials needed:

- Pencil
- Notebook
- Magnifying glass or phone (optional)
- Gloves (optional)
- Ruler (if available)

Key Words to know:

Crop - a cultivated plant that is grown for food, fiber, medicine, or livestock feed

Mature Plant - the plant with leaves, roots, and stems

Plant - a living thing that relies on photosynthesis

Seedling - a young plant grown from a seed that has sprouted above the soil

Preparation:

- Watch this video from the University of Wyoming Extension service to learn about how plants survive Wyoming winters: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8a-FiWU6eA>
- Watch this video from the University of Wyoming Extension service to learn about some of the wildflowers that grow in Wyoming: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAFUT9GFpd8>
- Read these information cards about common crops growing in Wyoming to learn about plant structures.

Do the Activity:

1. Head outside and find a place where plants have grown in the past.
2. Push aside the old, dead plants and look for new growth.
3. Examine the plant – use the magnifying glass or take a picture to help blow it up if you want.
4. Draw a sketch of the plant in your notebook.
5. Describe the plant. Some things to notice and describe include:
 - What kind of ground is the plant growing in (for example rocky, sandy, sloped, flat, soggy, etc.)?
 - Is the space sunny, shady, or a bit of both?
 - What else is growing around the space (other plants, trees, bushes, etc.)?
 - What shape are the leaves?
 - What do they feel like?
 - What does the stem look like?
 - Does it feel soft and bendable, or stiff and brittle?
 - Is there snow on the ground?
 - Is the plant in good shape, or does it look like it was damaged somehow? Describe the damage.
 - How does this plant compare to the plants on the information cards – does it share any of their features?
6. Look for other plants in the area. How many different types can you find?
7. Sketch the different plants in your book.
8. Draw a picture of how you think the plants will look when they are fully grown.
9. Can you identify the plant? If you need help, check out these websites. They have examples of many plants found in Wyoming. If you can't identify the young plant, you may need to come back after it has grown and matured.
 - Wildflowers of Wyoming website: <https://uswildflowers.com/wfquery.php?State=WY>
 - Perennial garden flowers website: <https://wyomingplantcompany.com/product-category/perennials/>

10. Draw a picture of a garden with plants you would like to see growing there. Label your plants and tell why you chose them.

Learn more about some of the plants that grow in Wyoming with these lessons and resources from the Wyoming Stewardship Project

2nd Grade:

- **Agriculture – Lesson 3** Students learn where certain crops are grown in Wyoming and hypothesize reasons for some areas being better suited for growing crops than others (water availability, elevation, and topography).

3rd Grade:

- **Outdoor Recreation & Tourism – Lesson 4** Students will discuss the relationships of humans, plants, and animals in Wyoming.

4th Grade:

- **Agriculture – Lesson 4** Students will understand how different plant characteristics support the survival, growth, and reproduction of various Wyoming crops.