

LET'S MAKE WILLOW TEA

Objectives:

Children will know: Children will learn about medicinal properties of willow.

Children will do: Children will make their own willow tea.

Essential Questions:

- What is willow?
- How do we use willow?

Standards:

- L10. Follows directions.
- M3. Describes and compares measurable attributes.
- PSH3. Shows self-control.
- SSC3. Asks questions and finds answers through active exploration of nature.



Materials:

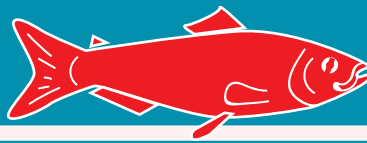
- Willow
- String
- Knife
- Tea bags
- Willow Picture
- Collection bags (plastic bags etc)
- Garden Clipper
- Baking Sheet
- Air tight glass jars

Promoting Culture Self Assessment:

- 1. I display pictures, posters and other materials that reflect the cultures and ethnic backgrounds of children and families served in my early childhood program or setting.
- 6. I encourage and provide opportunities and experiences for children that support Alaska Native culture.
- 7. I plan trips and community outings to places where children can learn about their own cultural or ethnic history.

Alaska Native Values:

Learning by doing, Respect for the environment, Living a subsistence lifestyle



Engage

"Plants are very important parts of our lives. The plants we walk past every day are useful in some way. Do you know what plant this is? Show a picture of a willow. "This is a willow. Willows are everywhere! There are many different kinds of willow, from small bushes to tall trees. Around here we mostly see small bushes and shrubs. They're usually found in wet areas alongside streams or rivers. It has small pointed leaves and fluffy small flowers called catkins. People have used willow for thousands of years for medicine. Lets see if we can find any willow around us to make into medicine."

Explore:

Activity: 20 minutes

Preparation: Choose a nearby spot with willow to take students to.

Take students to a spot with willow. Be sure to point out the characteristics of willow. Ask students leading questions such as where does it grow, what does it look like, what does it smell like etc. Have students collect twigs and leaves from the willows and put it in a collection bag. You may need to help them if it is early spring and the wood is still green. Be sure to bring the garden clippers to help students harvest the branches.

When you return to classroom, explain to students that the willow they have harvested needs to dry. Have them separate the leaves from the branches. When the branches are free of leaves, have students watch while you remove the outer bark of the willow. To do this, cut branches into smaller sizes with the clippers. Then take a knife and make a long slit down the branch. Once that is done, peel away the outer bark. Students can help with the peeling. Explain to students that the inner bark is the best part for medicine.

Place the leaves and inner bark on a baking sheet. Pre heat the oven to the lowest setting, anywhere from 150-180. Place sheet in oven anywhere from 2-4 hours. Once leaves are cirspy and crumbly they are ready.

Once the leaves and branches are dried and cooled, set them out on a table. Help students put the dried willow into tea bags or into glass jars for them to take home.

Explain:

"Willow tea has been used for generations as a pain reliever. Traditionally the inner layer and leaves were chewed or made into a tea to help with stomach or arthritis pain. Many people also used branches as a switch which was used in steams. The Alutiiq word for willow is "Cuaq." The Dena-ina word for willow is Ch'etl'. The Yup'ik word for willow is Nuwi'longok. Willow was harvested at any time of the year, but the best time to harvest it is in spring. Does anyone in your family use willow? Remember that willow is medicine, and it is important that medicine is used properly or else it could hurt us. Make to ask elders or adults in your family before you use willow."

Center Set Up:

Whole Group:

Display essential questions. Display willow branch and pre made tea bag. Display pictures of willow.

Art Center: Set out paints and paper. Set out willow branches and leaves. Have students paint the leaves of the willow branches to make prints. Students can use the branches as paintbrushes.

Sensory Play: Set out willow branches and leaves. Have students smell and touch them.

EVALUATION

Emerging:

Student does not participate.

Developing:

Student participates in discussion but does not engage in activity.

Proficient:

Student participates in discussion, listens to directions, and completes activity.

Advanced:

Student participates in discussion, listens to directions, completes activity, and shares story.

