Wild Edibles: Field Guide Activity 1

“A Field Guide to Wild Edible Plants” by L.A. Peterson

WORKSHEET: How to use a field guide

1. Obtain a field guide: “A Field Guide to Wild Edible Plants” by Lee Allen Peterson from the bookshelf. Complete the following worksheet by following the written instructions for each item.
2. Look in the first few pages of the field guide for the copyright date. Record this date along with the publishing company of the field guide (which should be on a nearby page as well as on the outside binding of the book).
3. Using only the Table of Contents or the Index, record the page number on which the following items are found:
4. “Miscellaneous Plants: Seaweeds”
5. “Ox-eye Daisy”
6. “Finding Edible Plants: Where and when they occur, Dry open woods”
7. “*Yucca filamentosa*”
8. “Food Uses”
9. Using the Table of Contents, find the section in your field guide regarding “poisonous plants.” Go to that section and read the nine rules given. Write down rules #1, 3, 4, 8, and 9.
10. Using the glossary, define the following words which describe edible plants:
11. Compound
12. Dermatitis
13. Herbaceous
14. Petal
15. Tuber
16. Turn to page 120 and notice the five different symbols on that page (in the left margin). Using the “Explanation of Symbols” and following the left margin from top to bottom, what do these symbols mean? Define each symbol and make a sketch or copy and paste it.
17. Turn to plate 10 (in the center of the field guide):
18. Write down the common name of the plant with white flowers
19. Write the “Genus” and “species” name (the words in italics). Be sure to underline the Genus species name since it is given in italics.
20. According to the brief description, the flavor of this plant is far superior to what?
21. Go to the page specified by the paragraph. List the three uses of this plant.
22. Assume that you know that the spotted “touch me not” has orange flowers. Using the color code at the top right corner of the pages in the field guide, find the page containing the sketch of the “touch me not.” Then, answer the following:
23. Record the page number found next to the page with the sketch.
24. What is another common name for the “touch me not”?
25. Write the Genus species name and underline it.
26. Is there a picture of this plant anywhere else in the book. If so, where?
27. Go to this plate and find “wild mint.” When does wild mint blossom? (Look for the season in capital letters at the lower right corner of the description paragraph.)
28. Find the “Food uses” section in the field guide by using the Table of Contents and answer the following:
29. Name the plant that is used for chewing gum only in the summer.
30. What part of the plant is used for the chewing gum?
31. Is there any difference mentioned between this “wild” chewing gum and store bought chewing gum? If so, what?
32. What is another common name for this plant? (Refer to the page number references).
33. Look up the following wild edible plants, giving the use of the plant and the page number where you found the information:
34. Chicory
35. Day Lily
36. Hawthorns
37. Giant Puffball

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ANSWER KEY

1. Done [*Obtain a field guide: “A Field Guide to Wild Edible Plants” by Lee Allen Peterson from the bookshelf*.]
2. 1977 Houghton Mifflin Company Boston [*Copyright & Publishing Company*]

3. [*Page numbers for various items in the Table of Contents*]

a) 234 [*“Miscellaneous Plants: Seaweeds”*]

1. 58 [*“Ox-eye Daisy”*]
2. 272 [*“Finding Edible Plants: Where and when they occur …”*]
3. 20, 170 [*“Yucca filamentosa”*]
4. 304 [*“Food Uses”*]

4. [*Rules #1,3,4,8,9 regarding “poisonous plants” using the Table of Contents*]

#1 Learn to recognize and avoid the common poisonous plants in your area

#3 Do not use any plant that you cannot positively identify as edible.

#4 Do not assume that plants that superficially resemble edible plants are themselves edible.

#8 Sample unfamiliar edible plants sparingly at first.

#9 There are no foolproof tests for determining either edible or poisonous plants.

5. [*Using the glossary, define the following words*]

“compound” (leaf) Divided into two or more leaflets. The leaflets can be further subdivided, twice-compound, or even thrice-compound

“dermatitis” Inflammation of the skin.

“herbaceous” Fleshy, non-woody; leaf-like in color and texture.

“petal” One of the segments of the inner floral envelope: usually colored, showy; may be joined basically or separate.

“tuber” A thickened, short, underground branch with numerous buds or eyes (as in a potato).

6. [*Using page 120 and the five different symbols, define each symbol & make a sketch*]



a) seasoning/condiment: fresh or dried leaves, roots, fruit or seeds used as flavorings.



b) tea: fresh or dried leaves, roots, flowers, fruit, bark (steeped or steamed over hot water)



c) salad: tender leaves, roots, tubers, shoots or stems (uncooked)

d) pickle: roots, stems, flowerbuds, young seedpods



e) cooked vegetable: boiled, baked or fried vegetables (parsnips, peas, green beans, celery, broccoli, mushrooms)



1. [*Turn to plate 10 for these questions*]

a) common strawberry [*common name of plant with white flowers*]

1. Fragaria virginiana [*Genus, species name of the same plant*]
2. Far superior to domestic strawberries [*Flavor superior to what plant?*]
3. Page 30: fresh or cooked fruit, jelly/jam, tea [*3 uses of this plant*]

8. [*Assume that you know that the spotted “touch me not” has orange flowers. Using the color code at the top right corner of the pages in the field guide, find the page containing the sketch of the “touch me not.” Then, answer the following*]

a) Page 92: “Spotted Touch Me Not” [*page number found next to sketch*]

1. Jewelweed [*another common name*]
2. Impatiens capensis [*Genus, species name*]
3. color plate 2 [*where is another picture of this plant?*]
4. wild mint blossoms in summer [*When does wild mint blossom?*]

9. [*Find the “Food uses” section in the field guide by using the Table of Contents and answer the following*]

a) Page 288: Compass-plant [*plant used for chewing gum in summer*]

1. hardened sap [*Part of plant used for chewing gum*]
2. wild chewing gum may be brittle at first [*compare to store bought gum*]
3. Page 88: Rosinweed [*another common name for this plant*]

10. [*Look up the following wild edible plants, giving the use of the plant and the page number where you found the information*]

a) chickory page 144 coffee, salad, cooked green

b) day lily page 92 salad, asparagus (steamed or boiled young shoots), cooked vegetable, fritters (flowers dipped in batter and fried in oil), seasoning

c) hawthorns page 216 jam, jelly, tea

d) giant puffball page 238 cooked vegetable, sautéed