

Natural Medicine – The Neem Tree of India

TEACHER: *What do you see in this picture?*

STUDENTS: *Oil, shampoo, soap, toothpaste, powder, lotion and a branch*

What do you use these products for?

Cleaning our bodies, making our skin soft, staying healthy, etc.

These products do more than just clean our bodies. They are all made with a special ingredient that also helps to keep our bodies healthy. Look at the photo again. Can you guess what the special ingredient is? Hint: It is hiding in the picture!

Leaves

You guessed it! These leaves can help keep you healthy. All of these products are natural medicines. Raise your hand if you have ever had to take medicine.

(Wait for kids to raise hands and continue.)

The medicine that is inside of them comes from the leaves, bark, seeds, roots and fruit of a tree called the neem. People in India have used the neem tree to make medicines for many years. People apply the special neem soaps, lotions, oils, powders and pastes to their bodies like a medicine. They use the neem tree to help them cure chicken pox, malaria, toothaches, fevers, burns, warts, etc. The list goes on and on! In fact the neem tree is often nicknamed “the village pharmacy,” because it can help treat so many health problems. People have been using the neem tree as medicine for over 4,000 years. Using trees, plants, and other things found in nature as treatments, has a special name in India. It is called, Ayurvedic medicine. Why do you think people long ago started using the neem tree for medicine?

They didn’t have doctors, drugstores, etc.

They did not have drug stores and hospitals to go to when they became sick. They needed to find things in nature that would help to cure them.

Today, some people in India, and other parts of the world still practice Ayurvedic medicine. In fact, many of the medicines your doctor gives you when you get sick, are made from trees, plants and other things found in nature.

Neem trees are not only good for making medicine, they are also helpful to people in other ways. The large canopy of the neem tree provides cooling shade from the hot sun. Farmers use the oils from the tree’s leaves to make safe pesticides, which help keep over

200 different kinds of bugs from eating their crops. People also enjoy eating the tree's tasty flowers.

The neem tree helps the environment by filtering pollution out of the air. And, the dead leaves of the tree do a wonderful job nourishing poor soil, and making it healthy for new plants and trees to grow.

Animals like neem trees because their branches provide protective homes. Bats eat neem fruits, and bees use their flowers to make honey.

As you can see, the neem tree is pretty amazing. How can people in India, and the rest of the world, use neem trees and still protect them?

They can only take a few branches/leaves from the neem at a time. If they cut down a neem, they should plant another one.

Neem trees do a good job of quickly regrowing their branches. If people are careful to only take a few branches and fruits from the tree at a time, the tree will not be harmed, and will be there to help people in the future. People should plant young neem trees around their villages, and only cut the large trees when truly needed. Neem trees can grow in many different climates, including places that are very arid (or dry). In fact, they are some of the only trees in India that can survive long periods of drought (no rain). As long as people are always planting more trees than they cut, there should be enough neems in India to help the environment, animals and people for years to come.

Kindergarten Standards:

NYS Common Core Kindergarten Social Studies Standards

- K.2.b Cultures include traditions, beliefs, and shared values and ideas generally accepted by a particular group of people.
- K.2.c Children, families, and communities from different cultures all share some common characteristics, but also have specific differences which make them unique.
- K.9.a Children, families, and communities of today can be compared with those in the past.

Kindergarten ELA Power NYSCCLS (ICSD Power Standards in Bold)

Reading Standards for Informational Text: Kindergarten

- **Integration and Knowledge of Ideas**
 - 7. With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear (e.g., what person, place, thing, or idea in the text an illustration depicts).**

Speaking and Listening Standards: Kindergarten

- **Comprehension and Collaboration**
 - 1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.**
 - a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others and taking turns speaking about the topics and texts under discussion).**
 - b. Continue a conversation through multiple exchanges.**
 - c. Seek to understand and communicate with individuals from different cultural backgrounds.**
 2. Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.
 - 3. Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.**

- **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**
- 6. **Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.**

Language Standards: Kindergarten

- **Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**
- 6. **Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts.**

Next Generation Science Standards for Kindergarten

K-ESS2 Earth's Systems

- ESS2.E: Biogeology
 1. Plants and animals can change their environment. (K-ESS2-2)
- ESS3.C: Human Impacts on Earth Systems
 1. Things that people do to live comfortably can affect the world around them. But they can make choices that reduce their impacts on the land, water, air, and other living things. (secondary to K-ESS2-2)

K-ESS3 Earth and Human Activity

- ESS3.A: Natural Resources
 1. Living things need water, air, and resources from the land, and they live in places that have the things they need. Humans use natural resources for everything they do. (K-ESS3-1)
- ETS1.A: Defining and Delimiting an Engineering Problem
 1. Asking questions, making observations, and gathering information are helpful in thinking about problems. (secondary to K-ESS3-2)