

Support Materials for Botany 360: Tour of the Idaho Botanical Garden

Objective: The learner will identify the purposes, benefits, and varies of city botanical gardens.

Background Reading:

Plants are the key living organisms that support all other life on earth. Plants include grasses, trees, flowers, bushes, food crops, shrubs, mosses, and more! Botany is the study of plants, and botanists are plant scientists. Botanical Gardens, usually located in cities, are places where specific plants are grown and cared for. People are invited to come and walk through the gardens. Botanical gardens provide a place of beauty and refuge, a place to learn more about plants, and a place where botanists can conduct research.

There are over 400,000 different kinds of plants on earth. Vascular plants have parts, such as roots, stems, and leaves that are able to move water and nutrients through the plants. Most common plants found in botanical gardens, such as trees, bushes, or flowers, are in the vascular group. A botanical garden may demonstrate the diversity of plant life by having many smaller gardens, including herb gardens, vegetable gardens, children's gardens, desert gardens, rose gardens, and more. Although most plants make their own food, some plants are actually meat-eaters! There are over 600 different species of carnivorous plants that kill their prey (mostly insects and spiders), then digest the bodies for nutrients.

Plants and humans are connected in many ways. Without plants, human life could not exist. Plants provide almost all the food we eat, whether in the form of edible plants such as fruits, vegetables, and grains, or products such as meat, milk, and cheese that come from animals that eat plants. Plants supply oxygen that we breathe to keep our cells and bodies working. Many medicines that humans use come from plants. Plants hold the soil together, provide shade that cool the air temperature, and supply habitat for animals. Plants make the world more beautiful and help make people happier and healthier.

Learn more at <https://sciencetrek.org/topics/botany>.

Discussion Questions:

- What are the three purposes of a city botanical garden?
- What are some examples of plants that are useful to people?
- What are some examples of different kinds of gardens that may be included in a large Botanical Garden?
- How do carnivorous plants obtain nourishment?
- Why is it important for people to learn about plants?