

Camptown Nature 101

Plants Series – Day 1 – Plant ID

Host: Collin Emmert



1. Plant ID

Common Midwest plants: The host will identify and speak about several common Midwest/Eastern U.S. plants. Plants we might find are Wild Ginger, White Snakeroot, Spice Bush, Stinging Nettle, Jewelweed and Poison Ivy. Below are some easy plants to identify. At state parks, ask a naturalist about tools to help identify plants. You can also check out plant identification Apps on your phone.



Wild Ginger is found all over the Eastern half of the U.S. It grows in rich soils and shady forests. When hiking on any path in Indiana State Parks, clumps of Wild Ginger can be found. The Wild Ginger leaf is heart shaped and at the center has the letter “U”.

White Snakeroot is a very common Midwestern plant. It can grow up to 3 feet tall and at the top grows tiny white flowers. Down the stalk are pointed thin leaves. This plant is not one to eat, it is poisonous and can cause death to humans whom eat it.



Spice Bush is a stout, aromatic shrub that is found in damp woods. The leaves are oval shaped and when crushed start to smell like spices. During the spring you can find them by their yellow flower and during the fall they will have clusters of tiny red fruits.

Stinging Nettle is an aggressive invasive plant that has become common in the United States. The leaves of a nettle are coarse and toothed. The nettles can grow 2-5 feet tall and when rubbed against can cause a painful stinging sensation.



Jewelweed is a common widespread plant that grows in moist, semi-shady areas. It often grows in large patches. At the top of the Jewelweed plant grows a red-orange flower.

Poison Ivy is commonly found growing in yards, along the roads, in forests, and even urban areas. Poison Ivy's leaf is famously composed of three leaflets.



Activity: In your backyard or local park see if you can identify the plants we have mentioned. Then with your Parents' permission, research and answer the questions below.

- Why is White Snakeroot connected with President Abraham Lincoln?
- Which two plants can you make a tea out of?
- How can Jewelweed stop the sting of Stinging Nettle?