

# FLEMINGTON FOOD FOREST - TEACHER'S NOTES

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## Lesson 1 – What is a Food Forest?

Objective:

This lesson introduces students to the Food Forest Garden.

### Activities

1. Around the main Food Forest Sign explain the key aspects of a Food Forest, you might find it helpful to compare it to the community garden adjacent with its raised garden beds.
2. Explain the difference between perennial and annual plants. Find examples in the Food Forest e.g. apple tree – perennial, lettuce – annual. Note how the majority of plants in the community garden are annual whilst the Food Forest is more perennial.
3. Divide the students into groups and discuss the symbol for leaf type on the sign. Each group can be allocated a hinged sign which they should examine and discover the type of leaf the plant has.
4. Explain the “7 Layers” of the Food Forest referring to the symbols on the sign. Some items to discuss include:
  - How plants in different layers help each other e.g. groundcovers protect roots from drying out, trees shade smaller plants and leaves drop to form mulch and become soil, vines climb up tree trunks to get more sun.
  - How not only are the plants different heights above the surface but below the ground so they can get different nutrients.
  - Some layers such as herbaceous will need to be explained, this can be done by walking through the garden and pointing out a “woody shrub” such as rosemary or lavender and comparing it to “herbaceous” horseradish with its soft stem, explain that in winter when it is too cold the horseradish leaves will die but the roots will remain alive and the plant will resprout in spring when it is warmer.
  - Point out different plants and get the students to guess what layer it might be in.
5. As a class discuss what the term edible means and ask students to give some examples of plants, and their parts that are edible and ones that are not. E.g. the Gumtree in the community garden is not edible, the fruit on the nectarine tree in the Food Forest is edible. Explain that they should always be sure of what something is before eating it as it could make them sick.

### Extra Challenges

In small groups get the students to choose a hinged sign and find out:

- a. What layer the plant is in
  - b. Draw three “USE” symbols and refer to the main sign and guess what they mean, refer to the main sign to see if they guessed correctly.
  - c. Under the heading “HARVEST” look at the symbols and work out which part of the plant is edible.
- Check under the “ORIGIN” heading and work out what continent it originates from