



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2000 Volume VI: The Chemistry of Photosynthesis

How Plants Help Us Breathe

Guide for Curriculum Unit 00.06.02
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The unit "How Plants Help Us Breathe," is an interdisciplinary unit that was written for third grade, but can be used for grades 2 through 5. The unit was prepared with the idea of using it in conjunction with a third grade social studies curriculum on the community. The unit begins by explaining the human respiratory system - specifically the function of the lungs. The comparison is then made to how plants breathe and the function of photosynthesis that takes place in the leaves. The unit discusses the problems of acid rain, global warming, ozone depletion and their affects on the air we breathe. Throughout the unit reference is made to ten hands-on experiments that the students can do. A strong emphasis is placed on children understanding that as citizens they need to try to influence what happens to the environment. There are also lesson plans for a student journal, letter writing to an elected official, and making an environmental poster. Students will also complete a hypermedia class presentation about what they have learned. There is both a teacher, and student bibliography. A list of appropriate web sites and videos are also included.

(Recommended for Science, grades 2-5.)

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