

Raingarden Plant Cards: Journal Tips

For the individual option in the raingarden plant cards activity.

“Journaling is the single most powerful tool to supercharge your observation, memory, and connection with nature. It is the critical foundational habit of being a naturalist and scientist.” –John Muir Laws



Facilitating meaningful journaling:

- Emphasize the skill of observation more than a “good” artistic drawing.
- Writing and drawing together enhances the experience. Labels, arrows, measurements, creating a magnified view circle, sentences, and descriptions are placed creatively and can be artistic as well. Simple notes such as date, time, weather, and location reflect how a scientist would take field notes.
- Teachers can journal along with students to add to a sense of shared observation.
- Expand the experience: Sound, movement, and smell play a role in the lived experience, and can also be expressed on the page creatively.

Commenting and peer-review on journals:

- Comment on which observations were recorded, the detail used, and strategies.
- Avoid commenting on artistic quality in itself.

Additional options:

- Key vocabulary may be instructed to include in journals
- Tools such as rulers or looking lenses
- Journal in the same place at different times to develop a story of place
- All sorts of drawing and coloring methods can be used at various times. Coloring or painting can take place after an initial sketch, or paint, colored pencils, etc. can be taken outside to use.
- The same object or plant can be drawn from different perspectives (standing, sitting, angle, bird’s-eye-view, etc.)