

Native Plant Sign Making

Designed to support your Meeting & local action

<https://quakerearthcare.org/day-of-action/>

Intro to Activity

This is a hands-on, intergenerational activity well suited to persons of all ability levels with a creative spirit! Participants will research plants in their meeting's backyard (especially natives) and uncover how they support the local food web, and craft beautiful, weather-resistant wooden signs. Each sign should tell the plants ecological story in a couple short sentences or bullets – educating attendees of meeting on how that specific plant feeds native bees, hosts caterpillars, or shelters birds. This is an excellent opportunity to transform your Meetinghouse garden into an educational and interactive native habitat sanctuary.



Materials List

To keep this activity accessible and earth-friendly, the materials rely on natural components and avoid synthetic plastics.

- **Sign Components:**
 - Wooden Stakes: 1.5 to 2 feet long (untreated cedar, oak, or FSC-certified wood works best).
 - Wooden Boards: Small plaques, roughly 6-12 inches across 4-8 inches in height, and 1 inch thick for durability. Get from the local hardware store. Tip: Can you source this from a salvage yard or a local sawmill asking for scrap wood?
 - Hanging Material: Natural twine or hemp cord. Tip: See if you can find it at local thrift stores!
 - Hardware: Small metal eye hooks (2 per sign) to screw into the top of the wooden boards. Potentially a hand or power saw and/or screwdrivers to cut wood and/or pre-drill.
- **Crafting & Writing Supplies:**
 - Pencils & Scratch Paper: For drafting designs and facts.
 - Paint & Markers: Acrylic paint (water-based) or fine-tipped permanent paint pens. Another option is to use graphite pencil and use candle wax as a waterproofing sealant.
 - Brushes: Various sizes to maximize creativity.
- **Waterproofing (Eco-Friendly):**
 - Finishing Oil for Wood: Natural, plant-based oils (E.g. Raw Linseed or Tung) that soak into the wood and help create a water-resistant finish. (Tip: Avoid "Boiled" Linseed Oil as it often contains synthetic chemical drying agents).
 - Bees/Candle Wax: Can be rubbed over the dried paint/oil for an extra layer of water shedding.



Sample Run of Show

Time	Segment	Description
0:00 - 0:15	Gathering & Opening	Welcome participants. Begin with a brief silent worship or reflection on our testimonies (<i>Simplicity, Integrity, or Stewardship</i>). Divide up into pairs.
0:15 - 0:45	Research	Pairs select and ID a plant from the meetinghouse Using field guides (<i>Audobon</i>) and/or plant id apps (<i>iNaturalist</i> or <i>PlantNet</i>) - wikipedia is a surprisingly good starting place for reading about native habitat and food web support, though it's good to check the sources it cites.
0:45 - 1:00	Design & Facts	Pairs sketch out their sign design on scrap paper. The sign should include: the plant's common/scientific name, a drawing or color pattern, and one or two native food web or habitat building facts.
1:00 - 1:45	Decoration	Participants paint their wooden boards.
1:45 - 2:15	Final Assembly	Screw eye hooks into the top of the boards. Tie the twine to the hooks and loop them securely onto the wooden stakes. Apply the first coat of oil or wax sealant.
2:15 - 2:30	Blessing & Closing	Lay the signs out to dry. Gather in a circle to share one thing learned about our plant neighbors. Close with a prayer or moment of silent gratitude for plants as our relatives in the web of life.

Tips & Resources

Crafting Tips & Tricks

- Pre-Drill: Screw eye hooks can be tough on older arthritic hands or very young hands. Pre-drill tiny pilot holes into the top of the 1-inch wooden boards before the event to make twisting the hooks in effortless.
- Use High Contrast colors: Remind participants to use high-contrast colors (e.g., dark green or black text on light wood, or white text on dark-stained wood) so the signs can be easily read from a pathway.

Recommended Further Resources

- Homegrown National Park (homegrownnationalpark.org): This is a superb resource for understanding why native plants matter and building the native habitat restoration movement. **Add your meeting to the Homegrown National Park map!** (<https://map.homegrownnationalpark.org/>)
- National Wildlife Federation Native Plant Finder (nwf.org/NativePlantFinder): Enter your zip code to find exactly which plants host the highest number of butterfly and moth caterpillars (the backbone of the local food web).
- The Audubon Society's Native Plants Database (audubon.org/native-plants): Excellent for discovering which native plants feed specific local bird populations.