Exploring Nature's Neighborhoods

Objective: Students will investigate and compare plant communities across four distinct environments, identifying how environmental conditions influence plant growth and survival. Through observation, discussion, and sensory exploration, students will develop an understanding of plant needs, habitats, and the relationships between living organisms and their surroundings.

Materials: tomatoes and basil from the school garden

1. Review the concept of communities and discuss how plants, like people, live in different environments. Explain that different plant communities have unique characteristics and growing conditions.
2. Visit the pollinator garden and observe the variety of flowering plants. Discuss how these plants provide food and habitat for pollinators.
3. Explore the grassy field, observing the types of plants growing in an open, sunny environment. Encourage students to notice differences in plant height, appearance, and abundance.
4. Visit the wooded area to examine trees, shrubs, and other vegetation. Discuss how shade, moisture, and available sunlight influence plant growth.
5. Visit the student gardens to observe cultivated plants, including vegetables and herbs. Discuss how people help these plants grow by providing water, nutrients, and care.
6. Encourage students to identify similarities and differences among the four environments. Discuss why certain plants thrive in some locations but not others.
7. Invite students to sample freshly harvested tomatoes and basil from the student gardens, encouraging them to notice differences in flavor, aroma, and texture.

Mindfulness Activity- Community Connection

Materials: none

Have students stand in a circle in the garden. Ask them to think about how different plants contribute to their communities, such as flowers feeding pollinators or trees providing shade.

Invite each student to think of one way they contribute to their classroom or school community.

Finish with three slow breaths.

Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL)

SOL Strands: Scientific and Engineering Practices; Living Systems and Processes
Primary Science SOL Alignment: K.1, K.7, 1.1, 1.4, 2.1, 2.5, 3.1, 3.5

Month: September