

PlantWatch Education Program



Successful Second Year

Program Overview

The PlantWatch program is a partnership between Inside Education and the City of Edmonton. The program has been running for two years. PlantWatch is a three part program including: a teacher professional development session, student education program, and a citizen science monitoring project.

Teacher Workshop

An afternoon in May was spent at the University of Alberta learning about the PlantWatch program with Inside Education and Dr. Elisabeth Beaubien. Dr. Beaubien has been PlantWatching for 30 years and her experience and insight into plant identification and the uses of citizen science data was incredibly valuable to the 13 attending teachers.

Student Education Programs

Programs were held the last two weeks of April and consisted of an in-class and outdoor portion. The presentation tied in with the **Grade 4 Science Unit E: Plant Growth and Changes**. The outdoor

10

CLASSES

Applications were open to schools from across the city of Edmonton

224

STUDENTS

Participated in Plantwatch in 2016

6

OBSERVATIONS

Of first bloom recorded on NatureWatch in 2016

533

IMPACT

Participants Plantwatch has reached since 2015

portion included time to identify plants and set the students up with a class wide citizen science monitoring project.

Citizen Science Monitoring

As part of their project, classes contributed observations of bloom dates to the national citizen science monitoring database **NatureWatch**.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

- Annunciation
- St. Catherine
- Aurora Charter
- Father Leo Green
- St. Matthew
- Mount Royal
- Bishop Savaryn



Student and Teacher Feedback

“My students loved the program. They were eager to get outside to see the progress on our Saskatoon Bush. They loved the games that we played that day and have asked to play them several times since then. They always remember the plant life cycle now!” - Suzanne Despres, Teacher, Father Leo Green

“The students loved having ownership of their "own" plant to watch over. The monitoring made them more aware of all the nature that they usually ignore. I felt the monitoring was the most important component of the program as it connected the students to their outside world.

As a teacher, I really valued the presentation and the PD as it supported me as a teacher, providing background knowledge quickly and effectively in ways that could be taken directly to the classroom.” - Janiffer Song, Teacher, Aurora Academic Charter School

SUMMARY

The Plantwatch Education Program is a successful collaboration between the City of Edmonton and Inside Education. The overwhelmingly positive feedback from students and teachers is indicative of the value of meaningful, hands-on learning seen through the citizen science action-based program. With this, we hope to continue to offer this program in future years

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