



**Lesson:**

Design-A-Weed

**Ages:**

6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>

**Time:**

30-40 minutes

**Overview:**

Students create a "super weed" that prospers in the harsh conditions on planet Weediv.

**Goals:**

Students will understand how weed adaptations give the plants an advantage over native plants.

**Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to define *adaptation*.
2. Students will be able to give three examples of adaptations that specific weeds have.
3. Students will be able to describe how certain adaptations give weeds a competitive advantage over native plants.
4. Students will create a "super weed".

**Materials:**

Pictures and descriptions of at least three local weeds

Drawing paper

Colored pencils or markers

**Outline:**

1. Discuss local weeds adaptations.
2. Have the students create a weed that can withstand a harsh environment.
3. Present drawings to class.

**Details:**

Explain to the class what an adaptation is (a physical characteristic or behavior a plant or animal has that

makes it well suited to its environment). Use the pictures of local weeds to discuss specific adaptations local weeds have which allow them to out-compete native plants.

Tell the students about the planet Weediv. There are several different habitats on Weediv:

1. an extremely arid desert filled with succulents and cacti
2. a marshy area where plants grow in oxygen depleted soil
3. mountain tops that experience cold, dry weather all year, and are covered in snow eight months of the year

Students should design a weed that can survive in one of the habitats on Weediv. Not only must the weed be able to withstand the environment, it must also be able to take over and out-compete the native plants. The "super weed" should also have a common and Latin name.

**Wrap-up/Evaluation:**

Students present their drawings to the class. Wherever possible, make comparisons to real plant adaptations. Discuss case studies where exotic species really are out competing native species. Include where exotics came from and how they got here.

**Modifications:**

Students may use a drawing or text, or a combination of both, to describe their weed