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BotaniCOI

A Calendar of Educative Activities in the Garden

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Making a Botanic Crib

An educative program was initiated in 1997 at the Botanic Garden of the University of Coimbra. Using the fundamental principles for the environmental education, volunteer's high school students are annually trained. Guided visits and specific seasonally activities under different themes are prepared for school groups according to their *curricula* and also for general public:

Spring

March: celebrating the 21st March (Tree' and Poetry' day), visitors will discover the records plants with a pamphlet throughout the garden and also a book, a gift for the winners!



Carnival masks in the garden

March: an exotic environment that takes us to distant oriental regions, the thematic is the bamboo (and the panda...), remaining in our memory the unusual space and the acquired knowledge about it... and in our hand a botanical present for the father: a pencil box, a decorated bamboo.

April: to understand biodiversity nothing better than learning through senses and sensations and so.. Let's hug the trees... 8 different species to discover with an orientation pamphlet; after the "hug", observing attentively and registering notes, we collect leaves, flowers, fruits, pines.. and make an *herbarium*.

May: Mother, flowers... are now the theme... then, we are going to embellish a "botanical present", materialized from a plastic bottle, an example of recycling and reutilization of materials.. with imagination and a little of skill is transformed in a beautiful "bouquet" for a mother's gift.

June: "In Children's day the guide is a child": a lovely way for celebrating the 1st of June: an excellent citizen' example promising a "greener" future..! Children are the "roots" of future!

Summer

June: specially designed for pre-scholar children: to recognize the plants of the fruit-salad (banana, sugar-cane,

vanilla, mango-tree...) and that the gelatine is made from red algae; then they will eat a fruit salad or gelatine, a refreshing light afternoon snack.

June, July, August: during 80 minutes the visitors can enjoy and appreciate the differences ambiences and flora of the world, since the Equator, with the "queen" of water-lily, *Victoria cruziana* Orb.... to the cold greenhouse, a refreshing ambiance surrounded by tree-ferns and musci...

June, July, August, September: "Games for All children", "Painting in All ages" and "Theatre in the garden" are outside activities, prepared for all publics, including the one needing special care.

Autumn

October: ...what part of the fruit do we eat in a nut? Is it a seed, a fruit, the tegument... or... not all a fruit...??.. A trial through the nuts from here (Portuguese plants) and there (exotic plants): several examples to demonstrate the different types and parts of fruits... that later will be tasted...

November: the colours' changes (concepts of evergreen and deciduous plants)... collecting leaves to serve as a "mould" in the elaboration of a fossil with clay, the best way to understand the natural fossilation process.

December: a trial specially focused in the plants used for tea, including the proper tea-plant, *Camellia sinensis* L.:

characteristics, advices and fitoterapeutical properties& followed by a restful hot tea...

Winter

December: with parts of plants, pines, leaves, branches, fruits and using imagination, a botanic crib is made by children and theirs parents... some figures will be under the guard of the pitcher-plants, in the greenhouse, comprising a Christmas exhibition.

January: an ecological circuit using a pamphlet and the plants of the BG as living models to introduce the main notions in Ecology. Then the pupils selected two sampling areas in the *Arboretum* for the study of a terrestrial ecosystem using the squares' method. After laboratory

experiences, analysis and discussion of data is made by the "scientist-pupils".

February: what are the main parts of a plant?... some have cones.. other have flowers.. Learning about them and think: could there be both pines and flowers in a tree?... let's make carnival-masks recycling all the diverse collected materials and identify them !..

March: the code of the cells, the basis for biodiversity, like the 7 musicals notes and music, the alphabet and languages... walking through the garden to recognize and understand the differences of the leaving beings... from the macro to the microscopic observations: isolate DNA from onion cells; afterwards make a puzzle: a cell with its nucleus and DNA....

Come and see!

BotaniCOI: A Calendar of Educative Activities in the Garden

months/seasons	SPRING	SUMMER	AUTUMN	WINTER		
MARCH	Lost book near the "top" plants	 <p>Let's hug the trees.</p>				
	Present for my father					
APRIL	Hug the trees					
MAY	Present for my mother					
JUNE	The guide is a child				Fruit salad and gelatin	
JUNE, JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER					80 Minutes' Tour	
					Games, Painting and Theatre	
OCTOBER					Nut & Nuts	
NOVEMBER					Make fossils	
DECEMBER		Tea & teas				
JANUARY			Botanic crib			
FEBRUARY			Ecomata			
MARCH			Carnival masks			
			DNA			

Thematic visits all the year: Biodiversity, Extinction and Sustainability; Evolution and Characterization of the Main Plants Groups; Aromatic and Medicinal plants; The Botanic Families; The Garden's History; Discovering the Plant's World; Records' Plants in the Garden.