

Classroom Technology Reviews

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Spring Wild Flowers (1994). Summer Wild Flowers (1994). Fall Wild Flowers (1995). Woodland Harvests (1996). Laurel Hill Press, P.O. Box 16516, Chapel Hill, NC 27516. Four VHS, sound and color, 45 minutes (Woodland Harvests is 55 minutes). Price: \$24.95 each.

 The first three of the tapes in this series are videographs (not simply still photos put on videotape) of wild flowers of the Eastern Deciduous Forest complete with rustling breezes and pollinator visits. The photography by Anne H. Lindsey is uniformly of extraordinary quality. Organized by family and with briefly superimposed names on the tape, the flowers are shown in sufficient detail to demonstrate their distinguishing characteristics. The tapes include 100, 80, and 80 species, respectively, wisely chosen to represent the most common and/or most interesting of the native or introduced but widely naturalized species. The narrative by taxonomist C. Ritchie Bell is authoritative and informative, covering uses of the plants as well as their morphology and taxonomy. Original music richly and unobtrusively fills the background.

Each of these wild flower tapes has an 11-page booklet attached to the jacket. The booklets contain an illustrated glossary of plant morphology and a chart listing the common and scientific names of the plants, along with information on plant height, flower arrangement, average flower size, sun/shade requirements, moisture, relative ease of cultivation, and general range within the region ...

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the same kind of information included in the voice-over narration.

The fourth tape, *Woodland Harvests*, has a somewhat different format. The emphasis here is less on taxonomy (although plant names are given) and more on mechanisms of dispersal. Fruits and seeds of 112 representative species of trees and wild flowers of the Eastern Deciduous Forest are illustrated along with information about their dispersal mechanisms and their uses as food by animals and humans. There is also a segment describing the collection of maple sap and its conversion to maple syrup. This tape is narrated in the gentle tones of the late Charles Kuralt. The fruits are organized, as usual, by dividing them into dry and fleshy groupings, though there are a few errors, as when berries are called "multiple fruits" rather than "aggregate fruits." This does not seriously detract from the quality of the tape, however.

One wonders about the intended use of the wild flower tapes. Certainly they are no substitute for a field trip to see the living plants except for those who cannot possibly venture outdoors. They seem to be unsuited as a means of mastering recognition of the plants except by those who have had some experience with the subject and need to refresh their memories. At the risk of violating copyright, students could use the videos to enrich their reports or professors could use them to illustrate their lectures on wild flowers. The *Woodland Harvest* tape, on the other hand, has the potential of informing general audiences (children to adults) about the intriguing subject of fruit and seed dispersal.

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Exploring the Nardoo (CD-ROM). 1997. The Learning Team, 84 Business Park Drive, Suite 307, Armonk, NY 10504; phone (914) 273-2226. Price: \$149.95 with resource manual.



A trip back in time and into the hills awaits you and your students. This exploration of the hypothetical Nardoo River drainage takes you through four time peri-

ods—before 1940, 1940–1950, 1960–1970, and 1990's—at four locations along the Nardoo's course—Black Ridge, Merringura, Tanuda and Walloway. Through time travel, you follow the drainage from pristine conditions, through gravel mining, then coal mining and dam building, and finally, logging and recreational use. Black Ridge is high in the drainage, and each of the other regions is progressively lower. This package was designed for grades 7–10 but will be a great addition to my community college class in introductory biology and to my colleague's lower division ecology class.

The Water Resource Center (WRC) contains some large collections of useful resources of four types. The first type of resource consists of three elements: (1) a presentations guide that gives directions and examples of nine ways (genre) to share the information a student gathers; (2) presentation tools; (3) editing tools. The second and third elements are very useful as built-ins. I chuckled over the minor glitch of an apple key symbol in the Windows version rather than the control key. All of the excellent instructions in this aid include directions, with examples, of good and bad notes that might be taken in collecting information for a presentation. Note taking is easy, because grab, click-and-drag, copy-and-paste, or typing put notes into an on-screen notebook. Even audio and video clips can be copied into the notes. All of the notes can then be edited for the final presentation and can be stored on a student's disk. My students have extremely varied backgrounds, and the note taking and presentation guides will be terrific assets for the students with poor backgrounds or who have been away from school for a while.

Research scientists at the WRC are the second type of resource. Peter Grey, Tatiana Uganofska, and Stephen Michaels explain how to use the WRC and offer suggestions if a student needs guidance in pursuing an exploration. Only if a scientist has offered to help with the particular investigation will he or she give guidance. The guidance may be suggested information to gather or places to look for