Bay Grasses in Classes

Biology and Environmental Science students grow Wild Celery in their classroom for transplant into a tributary of the Chesapeake Bay. Students take turns monitoring and testing the growing grasses after completing preparation activities on the Chesapeake Bay's health problems, and possible solutions. The students learn what the best conditions are for growing the grasses and where would be the best location for planting. Monitoring forms are sent weekly to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Best Practice 1: What recognized community need was met by your project? Contact was made by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation to interested teachers to establish the communities need to help citizens of Maryland, Virginia and those living in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Restoration of submerged aquatic vegetation in the Chesapeake Bay to improve the water quality, which in turn will improve overall health, has an economic, scientific and recreational affect on Maryland.

Best Practice 2: How was the project connected to the school curriculum and curricular objectives? For Biology, the project is used as the issue investigation section of Expectation 5 in the Harford County Curriculum where students investigate an environmental issue and make life style choices. For Environmental Science, it is part of the Water unit and Chesapeake Bay unit in that curriculum.

Best Practice 3: How did participants reflect on their experiences throughout the project? Students are given guided reflective journals as homework and then a final reflective essay is assigned at the conclusion of the project.

Best Practice 4: How did students take leadership roles and take responsibility for the success of the project? Volunteer students helped after school with the setup and planting of the grasses. Students then take turns with daily and weekly monitoring of the grasses. Student volunteers are taken to the planting site to plant the grasses in a tributary of the Bay.

Best Practice 5: What community partners were worked with on this project? We worked with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and the Chesapeake Bay Trust.

Best Practice 6: How did you prepare and plan ahead for the project? The teacher attended a Bay Grasses in Classes workshop offered by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation as well as contacted the Chesapeake Bay Trust for funding of the bus for planting trips. Students helped in the setup and preparation of the growth chambers.

Best Practice 7: What knowledge and skills did students develop through this project? Students gain knowledge regarding the Chesapeake Bay, the submerged grasses, the plight of the grasses, and possible recovery as well as their overall importance to the Chesapeake Bay. They also gain skills in scientific problem solving, data analysis, monitoring, and planting methods.

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