



WINTER | Air Breathing: Plants + People

Summary:

Plants provide our lungs with something vitally important, clean air! So how do those lungs work? Today, we're going to do a simple experiment that makes our lungs, hidden behind our skin and protected by our ribcage, visible.

Before Visiting the Garden:

Gather: Two snack-size paper bags and drinking straws, a pencil, and tape

Explore: Images of lungs both anatomical and artistic

Read: *A Boy and a Bear: The Children's Relaxation Book* by Lori Lite; As you read this book, encourage your growing gardener to begin thinking about his or her own breath.

In the Garden:

People and plants work together in a most interesting way. Plants exhale clean air that we inhale and people exhale carbon dioxide that plants need to inhale. We need each other to survive!

Questions to Explore:

- Can you see your breath?
- What does it look like? Feel like?
- Can you leap through the garden? What happens to your breath?
- Try holding your breath for a short period. What do you notice about your body when you aren't breathing?

Activity:

1. Use the images of lungs you researched to draw lung outlines on each of your paper bags. Try to incorporate the basic shape of the lung, along with the bronchioles, the highways in the lungs, and the alveoli, the traffic signals or tiny sacs that let oxygen and carbon dioxide move between the lungs and the bloodstream.
2. Insert the straws into the tops of the bags. Twist the paper tightly around the straws and tape the seams.
3. Have your gardener blow into the straw to inflate the lungs, an inhalation, and then depress the bags, an exhalation.
4. After a few inhalations and exhalations, have them put their hands on their chests and stomachs to feel their own inhalation and exhalation.

Beyond the Garden | Inhale Indoor Plants

An easy way to freshen the air in your home and to keep your green thumb happy during winter is to plant and tend an indoor plant. Most large hardware stores will carry indoor plants year round. Find one that you like, read the care instructions, and find the right spot in your house to keep it. Each time you see it, practice taking a deep breath, and then thank your plant for the hard work it does to keep your lungs happy.

Continue Exploring | Supporting Materials

Indoor Air Purifiers: <http://www.rodalorganiclife.com/garden/7-plants-purify-indoor-air>