

Bush Survival Skills

Instruction sheet

Before you go into the bush all participants must spray their shoes at one of the Kauri Dieback spray stations.

Guidelines for Taking a Bush Skills Session:

Aim: To teach students skills designed to help know what to take and how to survive in the bush in the event of an emergency.

- Start by splitting your students into three groups. They will work in these groups for the duration of the activity session.

Packing a Bag

Aim: To teach the students what is and isn't useful to have in the bush (10mins)

Location: The yellow room (Carey Park)
Lounge Room (Piha Mill)

Activity: Give each group a bucket of items and a backpack. Tell them they are preparing for a day trip in the bush. Keeping in mind they need to be prepared in case of an emergency e.g. they get lost and have to spend the night. They must decide on the ten most valuable items to have with them and give reasons why (filling in the activity sheet as they go). Later in the session they will present their pack to the rest of the students.

Bivvi/Temporary Shelter Making

Aim: To teach the basics of making a bush shelter (20-30mins)

Location: In Bush Clearing across the stream (Carey Park)
In Bush surrounding campfire (Piha Mill)

Materials: Tarpaulins, rope and any dead material from the bush e.g. Sticks/rocks etc. Note that Bivvi need to be dismantled at the end of the session so ensure materials can be easily removed.

Instructions

- From the room, groups must take their pack and go to the designated bush area. Before building shelters, get each group to explain what they have packed and give reasons why.
- If students selected a tarp and ropes they can build a bivvi, using the pictures provided as ideas. If students did not bring a tarp with them, they will need to use natural materials. You can briefly discuss the importance of caring for our native bush and the motto 'leave the bush as you found it' or 'take only memories' and 'leave only footprints'.
- Allow them to choose a spot in the area surrounding the clearing but they must be within sight at all times.
- Let them get building! Walk around and help them with ideas - give advice on knot tying (refer to knot-tying sheet), etc.
- Once they have finished, call all students together. Walk to each shelter and get each group to explain their design.
- Invite discussion and seek feedback from the other groups. Try for one positive and one constructive comment. Ask questions to challenge them e.g. Would this design be effective if it was raining? How could you improve it?

***Use the pamphlets available for more information. It is also good to talk about food and clothing as we don't have those items available.**





Packing Up

- Ensure that all bivvies are then taken down
- Untie all knots in the ropes and fold the tarps ready for the next session
- Headcount all students to ensure all are out of the bush
- Get students to help check to make sure that the bush looks as if no one has been there
- Return indoors, unpack bags and leave all equipment as you found it.

Extra activities

The following are further bush skills that you may teach your students if time permits

Making a Survival Bag

Aim: To teach the students how to stay dry and warm if stranded in the bush for a night

Location: The yellow room (Carey Park)
Lounge room (Piha Mill)

Materials: 2 black sacks and tape

- Cut the bottom off one black sack and join to the top of a second with tape. This creates a long tube.
- Explain to the students that this could keep you alive overnight as it is wind proof, semi-waterproof and if stuffed with leaves will keep you warm. Having black sacks in the bush is always useful as they are lightweight and can also double as a pack liner.



Discussion Points for Packing a Bag

The following is a list of useful facts to facilitate discussion as students present the items in their packs.

Lighter vs. matches

- If given the choice, students should choose a lighter over the matches. When matches become wet they are essentially useless.

Candle vs. torch

- A torch is only useful if waterproof. A candle can be useful to light a fire, however does not give off much light or warmth so is not the best choice.

First Aid Kit

- This is a must if going on a bush trip. A first aid kit should be well stocked with bandages, saline solution, an instant ice pack and a survival blanket.

Whistle

- A whistle is a very useful item in the bush to signal help is needed.

Water bottle vs. tin can vs. mug

- A water bottle is useful for carrying water when moving because it can be sealed, however water cannot be purified in a plastic bottle. The tin can is useful for collecting water and boiling over a fire, but cannot be sealed. A mug is useless.

Sunhat vs. a beanie

- A sunhat will protect you from the sun, however in the bush you have the tree canopy overhead. Your head is a main escape of heat from the body so a beanie at night will keep you warm, while a sunhat gives little insulation.

Walkie talkie

- Many students will think this is helpful, however walkie talkies are largely useless as they have a limited range of reception.

Plastic rubbish bags

- A plastic bag has many uses while in the bush. It can serve as a pack liner; can be used as a survival bag to keep you warm and dry overnight; can be used as an alternative to a tarpaulin for a bivouac or as a ground sheet to sleep on.

A pocket knife

- Because a pocket knife is small and light to carry, it is a useful item to have. Situations often arise in the bush where you may need to cut rope or clothing.

Gas cooker

- A gas cooker would be a helpful item if on a camping trip, however in a survival situation in the bush it has limited use. A fire would be a much better cooking source as it also gives off heat and light.

Items that are not useful

- Karabiner
- Phone charger
- Battery
- Deodorant can
- Remote control
- Binoculars

