



DALLAS ARBORETUM
Education

Garden STEM at Home
Let's Talk Turkey



WE GROW MINDS, TOO.

LET'S TALK TURKEY



OBJECTIVE:

STUDENTS WILL EXPLORE THE HISTORY OF TURKEYS IN THE UNITED STATES, INCLUDING THEIR DEVELOPMENT AS A DOMESTICATED SPECIES, THEIR ROLE IN POPULAR CULTURE, HUMAN IMPACT ON THEIR POPULATIONS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT.

SOURCE

Project WILD K-12 Curriculum & Activity Guide

BACKGROUND

The North American wild turkey has been existence for at least 10 million years! This bird has been an important source of food and clothing to indigenous people and continues to be a popular hunting species. It also is the genetic source of the domesticated turkey - which is drastically different in size and favor.

The wild turkey serves as an excellent case study in the complicated relationship between society and natural resources.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask students to discuss what they think of when they hear the word turkey. Then discuss if their thoughts are based on the wild or domesticated turkey.
2. Distribute the Wild Turkey Cards, available on the Project WILD link below.
3. Divide students into groups and distribute cards evenly amongst groups.
4. Provide index cards (or cut paper pieces) in two sizes or colors. On the larger pieces, ask each group to record one key date in the history of the turkey with a brief description.
5. On the smaller pieces, ask students to write a phrase or key words that describe how people viewed the turkey during each date card.
6. Once all groups have completed, place the cards in order to create a timeline on an open wall or floor.
7. Discuss how humans views about the turkey have changed over time. Possible discussion questions: (1) Have people always agreed on the value of the wild turkey? (2) How are the domesticated and wild turkeys connected? (3) Are there connections between how people viewed the wild turkey and their decline, domestication or protection?
8. Optional: Try to divide the turkey timeline into eras or ages based on what was happening at the time (i.e. Golden Age of the Turkey, Disaster Averted, etc.)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Project WILD Career Critters STEM Connections:

<https://www.fishwildlife.org/projectwild/step-stem-and-wild-work/lets-talk-turkey>

National Wild Turkey Federation:

<https://www.nwtf.org/>