



Native Palestine

This mini study unit focuses on the native animals and plants as well as the national symbols of Palestine. It is important to talk to your students about the impact that the current occupation of Palestine has had on the environment.

Lesson Plan

Objective : By the end of the unit, students will be able to recognise and name the national flower, bird and animal of Palestine. They will be able to associate Palestine with the natural beauty that Allah has bestowed on this land.

Warm up : Read the article Blossoming Spring in Palestine.

Presentation : Present the Native Palestine info sheet and Palestinian Sunbird sheet to the students. Read through each category. For older students, watch the documentary Palestine Sunbird: A Stamp of Defiance.*

Assignment : Make a Native Palestine Lapbook

Assesment : You may ask your students/child to present their lapbooks to you or to the family, sharing the knowledge that have learnt.

* For older students, I recommend watching the documentary, Palestine Sunbird: A Stamp of Defiance. You can find it here on Youtube
- <https://youtu.be/cqZcghhoN10>

Disclaimer: Clementine Homeschool is the author of only the Native Palestine unit of this collaboration.

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Blossoming Spring in Palestine

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Spring this year in Palestine is unique; manifesting a colourful appearance and a great wealth of flowering plants spread over the hills and countryside. In Palestine, the highly valued wild flowers are used for medication, cooking, decoration, and spiritual and traditional purposes. Flowers are recognised as an integral part of the national Palestinian heritage, filled with history and symbolism.

This year boasts high amounts of rainfall, which has exceeded the normal average for the same period. Rainfall has enhanced the growth of a wide and dense cover of flowers across the country. Soon after the first winter rains in October/November, a green carpet grows, covering the country until the next dry season. Pink and white cyclamen, and red, white, and purple anemones bloom from December to March, followed by the blue lupine and yellow corn marigold. Many native plants, such as the crocus and squill, are geophytes, storing nourishment in their bulbs and blooming at the end of the summer.

Palestine's landscape of flowers and plants changes abruptly within various geographical regions. But at this time of year, the hills, fields, and roadsides are ablaze with many colourful herbaceous plants. The red fields are dominated by anemones (شقائى النعمان) and overlap with poppies (الخشخاش), buttercups (برقوق - النمر), red everlastings (دم الغزال), and tulips (قرن الغزال الجبلى) - one of the rarest yet most beautiful flowers that grow in the wild. Light- to dark-pink colours are also seen - the most beautiful being cyclamen (عصا الراعى), linum (الكتان), bull mallow (خبيزة), Jerusalem sage (لسينه قدسيه), henbit deadnettle (خوذية - رأس الهر), and thyme (الزعر الفارسى), which has aromatic and medicinal uses. Yellow and white fields are also widespread and include yellow daisies (الاقحوان), euphorbia (أبو لبن وحلبوب الشمس), wild mustard (خردل), field marigold (مخلب القط), the beautifully scented jos flower (الزجس الشائع), toothpickweed (خله), chamomile (البابونج), watercress (جرجير), and gundelia (العكوب).

Many of these plants are used in traditional Palestinian cuisine. Blue and purple fields, mainly in the Jenin area, are full of beautiful flowers, including bright blue lupines (البرى الطرمس), sage (المريمية), cistus (اللباد), and germander (الجعدة), all of which have historical medicinal value. Other types of vegetation flourish too at this time of year. Natural woodlands of oaks, pistachios, pines, and carobs cover the hilly regions as well as their plant associations such as asparagus, honeysuckle, and others. In spring, rockrose and thorny broom turn the hillsides pink, white, and yellow. There are hyacinth, crocus, and narcissus in the mountains as early as December, followed by anemones, tulips, cyclamen, iris, and daisies. Honeysuckle creeps over the bushes, and large plane trees such as tamarisks and willows provide shade along the streams of Jordan Valley.

Today, forests of planted trees and bush plants such as pine, cypress, acacia, and eucalyptus are distributed throughout the country where wildflowers and medicinal plants grow in profusion. Fruit trees such as wild plums, peaches, pears, figs, medlars, mulberries, dates, and almonds bloom in spring. Blackberries, loquats, and pomegranates flourish during the summer months. In the south, acacia trees and the prickly cactus suck moisture from the desert. Atlantic pistachios strike a dramatic note among the dry riverbeds, and date palms grow wherever there is sufficient underground water.

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Another marked feature of the region is the great variety of bulbous and tuberous-rooted plants such as crocuses, cyclamen, fritillaries, orchids, and tulips. Bulbous plants flower either in the late winter and spring or in the autumn, when the weather is cooler and there is plenty of moisture around to promote growth. There are many special plants in Palestine that grow in the sand-dune habitats of the coast, such as acacia, tamarisk, and marram grass.

All this makes Palestine home to a stunning variety of plants. As part of the Mediterranean basin to the west and the vast desert to the east, Palestine is a world centre of wild plant biodiversity and is known for its rich biological resources and variety of plant formations. Palestine (West Bank and Gaza Strip) alone is host to 2,076 plant species - 1,959 plant species in 115 families in the West Bank, and 1,290 plant species in 105 families in the Gaza Strip. The plant families' composition and distribution differ from one geographical area to another since the ecosystems are different. This is why Palestine is such a pleasant place to wander through and has been called the Land of Wild Flowers; anyone who has seen it in spring would award it this title.

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ARIJ is a Palestinian research organisation that works in the fields of socio-economics, natural resources, water management, sustainable agriculture, and political dynamics of development in the oPt. More information can be found at www.arj.org.

Native Palestine

National Flower: Faqqua Iris



National Tree: Olive



National Animal: Gazelle



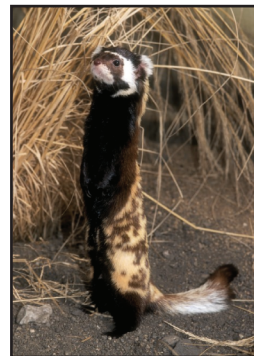
The Climate in Palestine is Mediterranean, with two main seasons; dry and wet. The wet seasons begins in November and ends in April.

Since the beginning of the Nakba in 1948, the state of Israel has continued to destroy Palestinian farmland and the natural environment, endangering native animals and plants.

Palestinian conservation organisations are working to protect endangered species just like many other conservationists around the globe. One of these organisations is the Palestine Wildlife Authority.¹

Resides in the Jordan valley and mountainous areas as well as the coastal plain areas. It is currently classed as vulnerable.

Marbled Polecat



Native Plant - Sumac

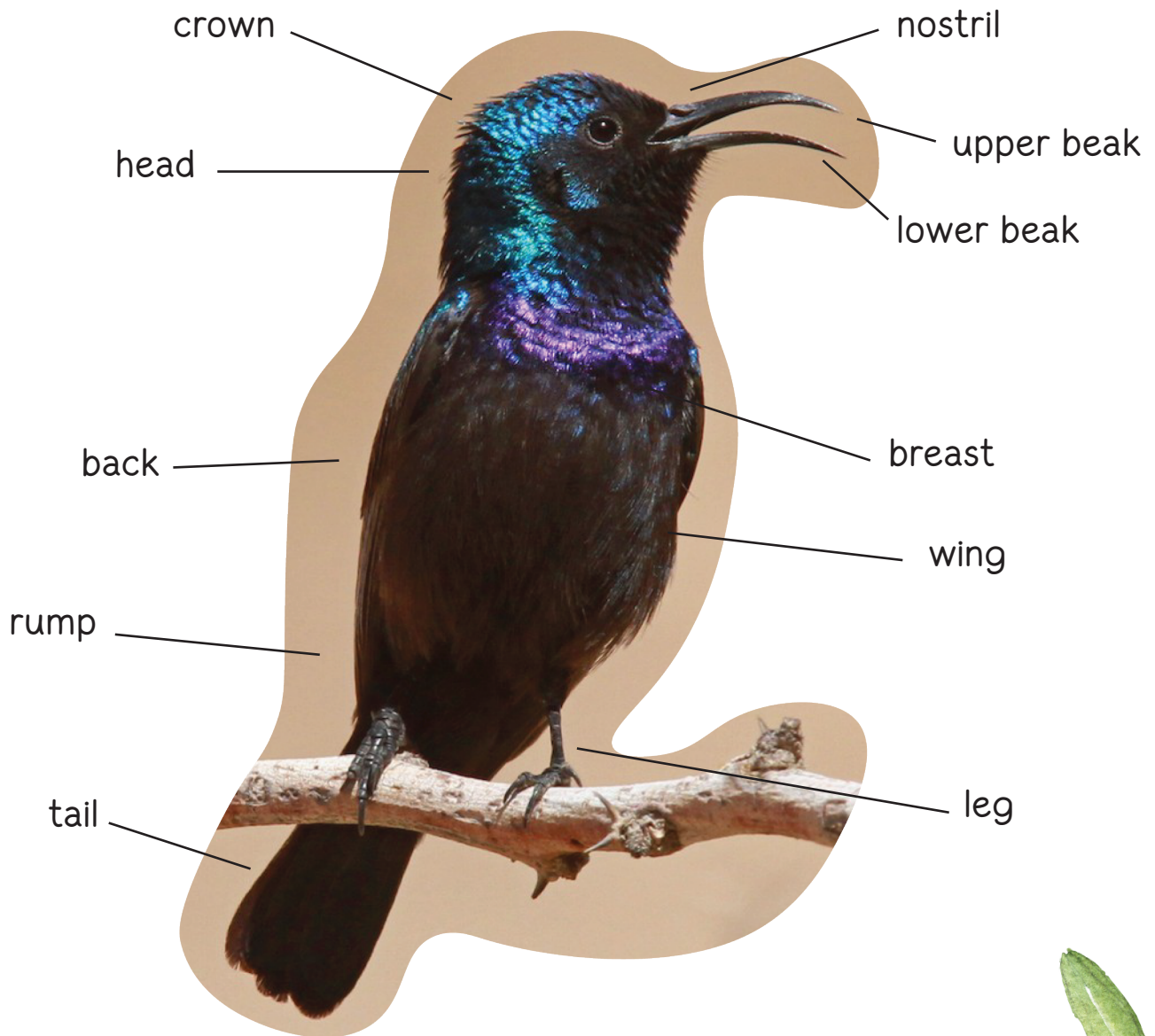


Sumac is the star spice in the famous and delicious Palestinian dish, Musakhan. It has a tangy, lemony flavour and it is high in antioxidants.



Palestinian Sunbird

The National Bird of Palestine



Feeds on flower nectar, especially fond of Jasmine.

Often found hovering over flowering trees and bushes.

The Sunbirds curved beak is adapted to extract nectar from flowers.

It is very small, measuring between 12-18cm.

The male is a flying gem of iridescent colours and the female is all grey with a black tail.



Worksheets and Cut Out Page for Lapbook

Dua is the weapon of the believer!

Write down a dua for Palestine, you can cut this out and add it to your lapbook.

A large rectangular box with a solid black border. Inside the box, there are four horizontal dashed lines, evenly spaced, providing a guide for writing a dua.

Draw a picture of how you imagine the natural Palestinian landscape to look then cut it out and place in on the lapbook.

A large empty rectangular box with a solid black border, intended for drawing a picture of the natural Palestinian landscape.