In this activity students will see a variety of common ‘products’ and a variety of plants (tree branches, flowers, fruits) on a table or on desks with labels. They go through and match the products with the plant source. This could be done with a worksheet, in groups or as individuals.

See excel file for a spreadsheet of products and plants pairs to use for this exercise; 10-12 pair would be plenty to talk about (some will be easier to obtain than others – it is not always important to find the *exact* species).

Ideally this exercise could be followed or preceded by a lecture on how plants have been used as raw materials for medicine, manufacturing, food and science. If you are having trouble finding the plants in your area (or don’t know where to begin)-you can always email me. I might know some common plants growing nearby that would easily work for this worksheet (for example, wild cotton and peanut plants are all over the SouthEast!).

Some easy example product : plant source(from the spreadsheet)

Pencils/paper: could get a chunk of wood as the ‘plant source’

Lotion/sunburn soother: aloe plant

Canned sweet potatoes: actual plant from grocery store

Soda: corn (main ingredient is corn syrup – could use candy too)

Popcorn (popped): corn

Perfume/shampoo: lavender; sage; thyme or mint (sometimes citrus: oranges)

Aspirin: willow tree (though it is made synthetically now)