Be a Botanist: Plant Observation

**Materials:** live plant specimen, ruler/measuring tape, kitchen scale (optional), magnifying glass (optional), tweezers (optional)

**Background Information:** A plant is one of a large group of living things that use sunlight to make their own food. Most plants have leaves, stems, roots and either flowers or cones. Plants use a green pigment called chlorophyll to absorb energy from sunlight. Grasses, trees, vines, vegetables, cactuses, ferns and mosses are all types of plants.

**STEM Career Connection:** A botanist is a scientist who studies plants, including flowering plants, and plant-like things such as moss and seaweed. Botanists study plant growth, structure, and uses.

**Challenge:**

1. Gather materials. Find a plant specimen to observe, either a piece of produce or plant inside your house or a plant somewhere outside your house.
2. Use your senses and STEM tools to make observations of your plant. Some things you could notice or measure include:
   a. What color or colors is the plant?
   b. What textures is the plant? Feel the leaves, stem/trunk, and other parts.
   c. What shape are the plant’s leaves?
   d. How tall in centimeters is the plant? Use a ruler or measuring tape to find out.
   e. Does the plant have an odor/smell?
   f. What is the mass of the plant? Use a kitchen scale to find out if you can.
   g. How is the plant used by humans and other animals?
3. Use the following diagram to help you identify different plant structures/parts.

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4. Clean up materials.