

Nature Near You



Journal Prompt:



What is the first feeling you express when you enter nature?

Animal of the Week: Burrowing Owl



These animals are known to nest in underground burrows that are decorated with droppings of their favourite prey such as deer or cattle. This attracts dung beetles which the owl can eat, and also hides the owl's smell from nearby predators. These creatures can be found in the Okanagan area and Kamloops but are listed as one of the three endangered animals under the BC Wildlife Act.

At Home Activity: Mason Jar Lantern

What you need:

- Mason jar
- white school glue
- food colouring
- paint brushes
- tea lights

How to:

1. Ensure your jar is clean and all residue from labels is wiped off.
2. Pour 1-2 tablespoons of glue on a plate and add a few drops of food colouring. Repeat as many times for more colours.
3. Paint your first coat on the lantern and wait for it to completely dry before coating with 2nd coat. If needed, you can paint up to 3 coats.
4. Add your candles and enjoy!

Other Resources:

Burrowing owl conservation: Learn more about what is currently being done to save our burrowing owl population in BC. www.burrowingowlbc.org/index.php/our-activities

De-stress with nature's spa remedies: Find ways you can relax and feel more replenished with hydrotherapy, meditation, sound and solar therapy, and more in this article!
www.hellobc.com/stories/psst-this-spa-is-free/?source=igodigital

Nature Near You

Journal Prompt:

What can we do better to protect our natural world?

Animal of the Week: Red Squirrel



Red squirrels are one of the native squirrel species in British Columbia. They eat a variety of seeds, nuts, berries, and leaves, which they gather and store for later. Their food-gathering habits help spread plant seeds so new plants can grow and thrive. These creatures are skillful foragers, and are even known to hang fungi over tree branches in the fall to dry so their food lasts longer during the winter!

At Home Activity: 5-Day Sprouts

What you need:

- Plastic zip top bag
- A paper towel
- A few bean seeds (any kind)

How to:

1. Take your paper towel and fold it so it will fit inside your plastic zip top bag. Once your paper towel is folded, wet it and place it into the bag.
2. Grab 3-4 beans and place them in the bag on top of the wet paper towel.
3. Put your plastic bag near a window, and in about 5 days your bean should germinate and begin to sprout!

Other Resources:

Indoor & Outdoor Scavenger Hunt: Inside out fun! Check out this scavenger hunt that will lead you to find interesting things both in and out of your home. <https://buff.ly/2Aix3M0>

Learn about Soil Erosion with this Experiment: Understand the importance of vegetation covering soil with this hands-on science experiment! <https://www.lifeisagarden.co.za/soil-erosion-experiment/#.U3uAtVhdVmc>

Nature Near You



Journal Prompt:

What does summer look like, feel like, and sound like?



Animal of the Week: Garter Snake



Garter Snakes are a type of snake that is found all across Canada. They can live in any environment except for water, so you may find these creatures in marshes, fields, forests, and more. These snakes hibernate in burrows, holes, and under rocks for almost 6 months a year, and only emerge in the spring. Female garter snakes can have up to 80 baby snakes in a single litter!

At Home Activity: Time Capsule

What you need: How to:

- Container (jar, box, etc.)
 - Items, photos, and other things to put inside.
1. Find a container that you can bury or put in a safe place.
 2. Gather your items. These can be toys, pictures, drawings, or anything you want your future self to see! Make sure they fit in the container you've chosen.
 3. Place your items in the container and bury it in your backyard, or place it in a safe place you'll remember to open in 5, 10, or more years!

Other Resources:

Aquatic Learning at Home: Ever wanted to learn more about marine biology? Monterey Bay Aquarium has several online courses and activities for youth of all ages:

<https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/for-educators/learning-at-home>

Edible Plants for Play and Learning: Learn the importance of edible landscaping for youth:

<https://naturalearning.org/edible-plants-for-play-and-learning/>

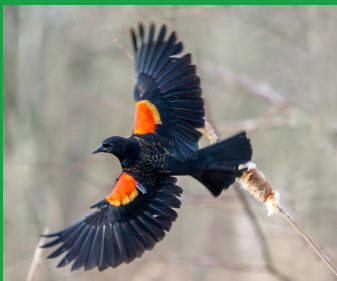


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Journal Prompt:

What is your favorite season, and why?

Animal of the Week: Red Winged Blackbird



The Red Winged Blackbird lives in saltwater marshes and watercourse areas, as well as in fields and meadows. The males have unmistakable red and yellow shoulder badges, which they use to attract the female birds. Male Red Winged Blackbirds are known to do anything for attention from females, from sitting on high perches to belting out their unique song.

At Home Activity: Bug Light Trap

What you need: How to:

- White sheet
- Tent Pegs
- Rope
- String
- Flashlight
- Jar

1. Find a location with trees and little outside light.
2. Tie your rope across two trees, and drape your sheet over the rope.
3. Secure your sheet to the ground with tent pegs.
4. Hang and secure the flashlight over one side of the sheet with string.
5. When it gets dark, turn on the flashlight.
6. Insects will be drawn to the light, where you can capture and observe them!
7. Return the insects to the wild where they belong.

Other Resources:

#RecreateResponsibly: Learn how to safely enjoy outdoor spaces during COVID-19 and how to responsibly and equitably participate in recreation:

https://www.findingnature.org/post/recreate-responsibly?mc_cid=8471bddeaf&mc_eid=6ee9152cc1

Virtual Outdoor Exploration: metrovancouver's Nature Break has videos of the outdoors that will immerse you in wilderness spaces from your home: <https://buff.ly/39hiCVA>

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Journal Prompt:

What is your favorite time of day to be outside, and why?

Animal of the Week: White-Tailed Deer



The White-tailed Deer is one of the most common large mammals in North America. They can be found in meadows and forests as they forage for green plants, nuts, and wood vegetation. The deer's unique white tail is used as a signal to warn its fawn and other deer of predators. The animals are also skilled jumpers, and can make horizontal jumps up to nine metres long!

At Home Activity: Recycled Bird Feeder

What you need:

- Recycled paper towel roll or toilet paper roll
- bird seed
- peanut butter
- string

How to:

1. Pour your birdseed into a shallow container that your recycled paper roll can fit in.
2. Coat the exterior of your paper roll in peanut butter.
3. Roll your coated roll into the birdseed.
4. String a loop through the paper towel roll and tie it.
5. Hang your DIY bird feeder on a tree outside to feed the birds!

Other Resources:

Spot Whales in BC: Find out the best places in BC to spot whales, and the times of year to see them: <https://www.hellobc.com/stories/top-5-places-to-spot-whales-in-bc/?source=igodigital>

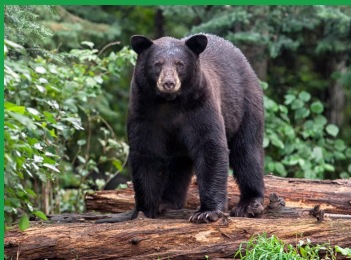
How do Plants Absorb Water?: A simple celery experiment to show kids capillary action in plants: <https://www.kiwico.com/diy/Science-Projects-for-Kids/3/project/Celery-Experiment/571>

Nature Near You

Journal Prompt:

Write about your favorite animal. Why is it your favorite?
What does it eat? What does it look like?

Animal of the Week: Black Bear



Black bears are one of the three types of bears native to North America. These bears are extremely skilled climbers, and have long, retractable claws that help them scale trees and terrain. Black bears have a varied diet, and will eat almost anything- from berries and nuts, to insects like ants, to small mammals and birds.

At Home Activity: Nuclear Reactor Leadership Game

What you need:

- 2 meter lengths of string or twine (1 per player)
- assorted toys
- 5 thick rubber bands

How to:

1. Group the rubber bands together and tie your 2 meter lengths to the rubber band bunch.
2. Find an open area outside to play. Place the rubber band bunch in the center.
3. Have each player take one string.
4. Designate one member as a group leader to assign the task!
5. All players do the task by manipulating the rubber band with the strings.

Video Demonstration: https://youtu.be/O_wu4EuUYC8

Other Resources:

Spiral Bee Combs: Learn about new research that explains why one type of Australian Bee constructs spiral combs: <https://buff.ly/311SDxw>

Nature Craft Ideas at Home: A list of fun and easy craft ideas using supplies you can find at home and in nature. <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2020/03/kids-nature-activities-self-isolation/>

Nature Near You

Journal Prompt:

What was your favorite outdoor adventure? It could be a hike, a trip, or exploring your own backyard!

Animal of the Week: White Sturgeon



Window

At Home Activity: Windowsill Garden

What you need:

- Windowsill or area in your home with natural light
- Plant pots or containers
- Leafy green or herb ends

How to:

1. Find an windowsill or area of your home with lots of natural light and a place to put your plant pots.
2. Fill your pots with potting soil and place your plant starts (leafy green or herb ends) in the pot.
3. Water and rotate the plants weekly.
4. Enjoy your fresh herbs and produce grown in your home!

Other Resources:

Scientist Discover Penguin Colonies From Space: Learn about how scientists used satellites to discover new penguin colonies in Antarctica :

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/08/200804200809.htm>

Painting With Nature: Use natural items from the outdoors to create pieces of art!

<https://teachmama.com/backyard-painting-with-nature/>

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Journal Prompt:

What is a natural place you wish you could visit? Why do you want to go there? What would you do?

Animal of the Week: American Pika



The American Pika is an animal in the Lagomorpha family, and is related to rabbits. These creatures live in rocky, isolated, mountainous areas up to 3000 metres in elevation! They eat any vegetation they can find. American Pikas live in colonies and communicate with cute squeaks and scent markings.

At Home Activity: DIY Sunprints

What you need:

- Dark coloured construction paper
- Small toys, sticks, leaves, or flowers
- Rocks or paperweights

How to:

1. Take a piece of dark coloured construction paper and place it outside.
2. If it is a windy day, weigh it down with paperweights.
3. Make a design on the paper with your objects by placing them on the paper.
4. Leave the paper and objects in the sun for six hours.
5. Remove the objects to see the pattern preserved on the paper!

Other Resources:

Sea Otters' Return to BC Ecosystems: Learn about how sea otters are radically changing BC ecosystems after being absent for 50 years : <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform/otters?fbclid=IwAR3FI3OwBepP7uFaY46v9B44vwIMaqLIMnzRDkbfpuZtJq3xbhzrFOchPIA>

10 Backyard Camping Ideas: Enjoy the fun and adventure of camping at home!
<https://outdoorafro.com/2020/05/ten-backyard-camping-ideas-from-outdoor-afro/?fbclid=IwAR2Qt-7L5yXdm4ZuXuD1ZORg127g-g2HLECDZuHnXIXnq0Z1777Xj78>

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Journal Prompt:

What is the most interesting thing you have found in nature?

Animal of the Week: Pacific Tree Frog



Pacific Tree Frogs are small frogs that are primarily found in the Pacific Northwest. As fully grown adults, they only grow to be five centimeters in length! These creatures eat tiny insects, spiders, and plants. Although they need to reside near a wetland or pond, their skin's waxy coating keeps them moist outside of water. A fun fact about this animal is that air temperature and humidity change the color of the Pacific Tree Frog's skin!

At Home Activity: Pressing Flowers

What you need:

- Flowers with flat buds
- Heavy book
- Absorbent paper (i.e. coffee filters or parchment paper)
- Weight (more books, dumbbell, etc.)

How to:

1. Find flowers outside with flat buds to make pressing easier. If possible, choose flowers which have just bloomed and are dry.
2. Remove the flower from the stem and place it flat on your absorbent paper.
3. Fold the absorbent paper in half, keeping the flower flat. Place the folded paper in the heavy book and press closed.
4. Place other weight on top of the book, and let sit for 3-4 weeks. Your flower will then be preserved!

Other Resources:

Garden with Your Family: Learn how to make gardening a fun activity that encourages family bonding : <https://buff.ly/2Fzgu0p>

Climate Change & Wildlife: Learn how climate change is creating a radical redistribution of life on Earth: <https://buff.ly/3aE63UV>