

Nature-al Discoveries in September

Welcome to Nature-al Discoveries, a program that brings us all back to our roots with our fingers planted firmly in the dirt and a respect for Mother Earth blossoming in our hearts. It is the antidote for a disconnect between Earth and its stewards. Today's world is dependent upon things that plug in and instant meals, and our children are being held hostage by video games and television programs. They no longer spend entire days outside exploring the wonders of nature, climbing trees, looking for animal tracks, or even sitting quietly and observing. Our children suffer from what author Richard Louv terms "**Nature Deficit Disorder**," a phenomenon that illustrates a draw toward technology and away from nature, leading to sedentary and antisocial lifestyles. The future of our planet depends greatly on the steps we take now to teach our children how to be good and active stewards of nature.

IN THE CLASSROOM

This month, we will focus on finding a **"sit-spot"** in nature. A sit-spot is a place outside among nature where an individual can sit and quietly observe the business of wildlife. Ask children to find a spot they enjoy in nature (park, playground, courtyard) and ask them to sit there quietly for 3-5 minutes. While sitting, have them observe the life around them (an ant hill, bees on a flower, birds in a tree).

Have children:

- Find a sit-spot
- Sit quietly for 3-5 minutes (longer for older children)
- Observe the life around them
- Draw a picture of what they observed



Art in Nature

Go for a walk. Collect items from nature along the way (leaves, twigs, acorns, rocks). Allow children to create a collage with the collected items, cardboard, and glue. Allow children to share their artwork with the group. Place the nature-al collages on display.

FAMILY FUN

Materials: 1 apple, 1 plastic baggie, one wet paper towel or napkin

Activity: Slice the apple into wedges and enjoy as a snack, putting the seeds aside.

1. Fold the paper towel so that it will fit flat inside the plastic baggie.
2. Wet the paper towel completely and place the (whole) apple seeds onto the paper towel, leaving space between each seed.
3. Place paper towel with seeds into baggie.
4. Carefully squeeze air out of the bag and seal it.
5. Tape the baggie, seed side outward, to a sunny window.
6. Observe. The seeds will begin sprouting within a week or two.

KIDDIE COVE

Can you find these critters outside?

Check them off when you find them.

locust



worm



spider



bird



dandelion



ant

