



OPEN DOORS
FAMILY DAY OUTDOOR
LEARNING ADVENTURES

OCT 9-11



FAMILY
DAY



Thank you for joining us on our Outdoor Adventures this weekend!

In every walk with nature one receives far more than they ask. ~ John Muir

Research shows that when people spend time in nature they have more energy, their anxiety and stress levels are lowered and they become happier.

People are more physically active outdoors, have less exposure to infectious diseases and allergens and have reduced chances of developing myopia (near-sightedness).

We're pleased to share a variety of activities designed to help you and your family plan and enjoy a weekend of nature-based activities.

Have fun choosing your adventures! We hope you enjoy your weekend of outdoor fun!



Great Things Happen Outdoors!

Choose your own Adventure!

Creating a Journey Stick

Journey sticks have been used for a long time by many Indigenous peoples around the globe. They can help retell a story or journey with items that are collected along the way (feathers, leaves, twigs, etc.) and are useful when navigating a new or unfamiliar route. You can etch symbols into the stick that represent land-marks on your journey or terrain such as a river, a forest, a valley, or anything else that will prevent you from losing your way on your journey.

View the article and video link below for great tips and ideas on collecting items from your walk and attaching them to your journey stick. Materials you will need to start are: a wooden stick, scissors and some yarn. Happy Journeying!

<https://www.bbwt.org.uk/blog/jenny-mccallum/family-activity-how-make-journey-stick>



Sit Spots and Sketching

You might be wondering, what is a Sit Spot? Simply put it is a place to sit quietly and observe nature for short durations over an extended period of time. Finding a sit spot can help you focus on the natural environment around you and how it can change over time.

Family members are encouraged to find a quiet space and take this opportunity to use their senses of sight, sound, smell, and touch. Try and take a few moments without any verbal

communication, so you can hear even the smallest sounds around you.

Sketching is a very relaxing way to capture and document your explorations in the outdoor environment. After settling into your sit-spots, family members are encouraged to sketch what they see, feel, hear or smell. Materials you can use are individual sketch books and drawing utensils like pencils and crayons. When the time is up, share what you have drawn and encourage others to share their sketches. What each person chooses to focus on will be different, so no two sketches will be the same. Celebrate that uniqueness in one another and keep a record of all your drawings as you visit and revisit the Sit Spot!

<https://www.sensorytrust.org.uk/resources/activities/sit-spot>



Great Things Happen Outdoors!

Stone Decorating / Story Stones

Collecting stones on a walk has always been a favourite pass time for many. From an array of colours, textures, and shapes to choose from we all have different reasons to scoop one up, explore it and possibly take it home. If you go on enough walks you have probably have more than a few stones! Try creating some art with those special stones using Sharpies, crayons or paint. Adding special words, designs and/or objects to your stones can also be a creative way to retell or create a favourite family story. Whether you choose to colour the stones or write on them, everyone is free to explore the endless options that stones and colour present. Take a look at the link below for additional ideas on How to Use Story Stones in creative ways!

<https://earlyimpactlearning.com/story-stones/>

Pressed Prints

Giving someone a chance to “pound” something can be both exciting and stress reducing for many children and adults! Here is a great opportunity for you and your family to experience the action of pounding to produce a magical work of art by creating your own pressed prints. Using a white piece of fabric or paper towel, collect natural items from the ground and place them on half of your fabric. Fold the other half of the fabric over the top of your items. Using a rubber mallet or flat stone hammer on the top of the fabric and marvel at the creation you have made. Materials you will need: mallets or flat stone, fabric or paper towel, flowers, grass, leaves, or any other item that can be found on the ground.

<https://wild-learning.net/hape-zome-or-the-most-fun-you-can-have-in-the-woods-with-a-mallet/>

Nature Collages



Take some time while exploring your backyard or favourite outdoor natural environment to create a piece of land art. Using natural items found on the ground and collected from the natural space around you, try constructing a nature collage. You may choose to work as groups, pairs, or individually to create your masterpiece. This collage will be constructed and then deconstructed before you leave so be sure to take a photo of your masterpiece that you create. Materials you will need: an old frame or branches formed to create a frame for your collage, a variety of items from nature that you can find on the ground (leaves, twigs, flowers, grass, etc.)

<https://rediscoveredfamilies.com/land-art/>



Great Things Happen Outdoors!

Nature Scavenger Hunt

A great way to get to know a natural outdoor space is through a scavenger hunt! You and your family members can enjoy exploring and discovering objects while using the link to the PDF provided below. This scavenger hunt not only highlights objects to find but also includes things to look, listen, smell and feel. You and your family can do this activity as a group, pairs or individually by planning ahead and sharing the link. Materials you might need include: a printout or link to the Fall Scavenger Hunt sheet and a writing tool to check off what you find. If you enjoy using scavenger hunts as an exploration tool try the additional links provided below. Happy Hunting!

https://www.cbc.ca/parents/content/pdf/autumnscavengerhunt_pdf_tmurphy.pdf

Additional links to printable scavenger hunts:

<https://www.momdot.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Camping-scavenger-hunt.pdf>

<https://www.craftsonsea.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Backyard-Scavenger-Hunt-Crafts-on-Sea.pdf>



Weaving

Weaving is a wonderful way to display your backyard and outdoor walk discoveries. Through this form of art, you will have the opportunity to experiment with weaving to create new and interesting designs. You may choose to use the yarn or natural twine to make a design, or incorporate nature materials that have fallen to the ground to intertwine with the yarn. Some children may be interested to use the twigs and yarn to create letters, numbers or symbols as a decorative

piece. Set your creativity free and have fun! Materials you will need: yarn, scissors, twigs, and anything you can collect from nature that has fallen to the ground. View the following link for step-by-step instructions for setting up the weaving frame:

<https://www.thechaosandthec clutter.com/archives/nature-weaving>

50+ Nature Play Activities to Enjoy in your Backyard

Activities big and small can be found in this extensive resource provided by Mother Natured. From such activities like Cloud Gazing and Making a Mud Stew to enjoying a family Picnic and Creating a (friendly) Scarecrow, there are so many fun and interactive things to do alone or with others. Try one or many activities this Thanksgiving weekend but most of all try and get out into a natural space and experience what nature has to offer, Endless Exploration!

<https://mothernatured.com/nature-play/nature-play-activities-backyard/>



Great Things Happen Outdoors!

LEAFO Bingo

With more than 80 native tree species growing in Ontario it is no surprise that tree leaves come in a wide variety of shapes, sizes, and arrangements. Each species of tree has its own unique set of leaves with characteristics that distinguishes it from the rest. By learning common leaf characteristics, you can improve your tree identification skills!

Next time you are heading out for a walk, print out a copy and see how many you can find. Can you complete a single line, just the borders, fill the whole card or even make an X? Many leaves will display more than one of the listed characteristics, challenge yourself to find a unique leaf for each box. Remember to leave living leaves on their trees. Good luck!

 Alternate leaves	 Asymmetrical Base	 Coniferous	 Cordate (Heart Shaped)	 Curved/Twisted Needles
 Deciduous	 Deltoid (Triangle Shaped)	 Double Compound	 Lobed	 Narrow
 Needles	 Palmately Compound	Free Space!	 Opposite Leaves	 Oval
 Not Lobed	 Pinnately Compound	 Oak	 Rough Edges	 Scales
 Smooth Edges	 Maple	 Symmetrical Base	 Wedge	 White Pine

Focus on Forests is Canada's leading forest education program that engages youth and educators in learning more about our forests. Focus on Forests is a program of Forests Ontario. Visit www.forestsontario.ca for other great activities, factsheets and lesson plans!





Great Things Happen Outdoors!

GARDEN YOGA FOR KIDS



Pretend to be a tree

Tree Pose: Stand on one leg. Bend the other knee and place the sole of your foot on your inner thigh. Sway like a tree in the breeze. Now the other side.



Pretend to be a frog

Squat Pose: Come down to a squat with your knees apart and arms resting between your knees. Touch your hands to the ground. Jump like a frog.



Pretend to be a seed

Child's Pose: Sit back on your heels and bring your forehead down to rest on the floor. Pretend to be a seed in the garden.



Pretend to be a butterfly

Cobbler's Pose: Sit on your buttocks with a tall spine. Bend your legs with the soles of your feet together. Flap your legs like the wings of a butterfly.



Pretend to be a flower

Flower Pose: Lift your bent legs, balancing on your sitting bones. Weave your arms under your legs, palms up. Pretend to be a flower in bloom.



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printable yoga poster



Great Things Happen Outdoors!

Activities & Apps to Enhance Outdoor Experiences

Whether you are an avid outdoor enthusiast, a person who enjoys getting outside to explore your community with your family, or would like to learn more about nature the following apps and websites are sure to add to your outdoor experiences.

Insects



If you have an up and coming Entomologist in your family then you should definitely download this free app. It will help with identifying a variety of insects as well as providing amazing facts about thousands of arthropods. All you need to do is take or upload a photo of any insect, and then the app provides accurate ID results within seconds. So take this app along with you on your next community nature walk and enjoy learning more about the insects you find during your travels.

<https://pictureinsect.com/>

Insect Identifier

This site is easy to navigate. All you need to do is make a few selections, enter in some descriptive details about the insect you are trying to identify and within seconds you will have the information. The insect identifier also allows you to choose a country, province or territory, so you have access to facts about insects from around the world.

<https://www.insectidentification.org/bugfinder-start.php>

Trees and Leaves and Plants, OH MY!

Leafsnap

Leafsnap is a free mobile app that assists you in identifying Canadian and local tree species from photographs of their leaves. This app by the Canadian Wildlife Federation has an extensive data base that provides information about the tree species including the leaf type, flower, and seeds produced. You can download the app to your mobile phone and enjoy this technology as you explore your community.

<https://cwf-fcf.org/en/resources/downloads/mobile/leafsnap.html>

[Home | Leafsnap: An Electronic Field Guide](#)





Great Things Happen Outdoors!

Picture This Plant Identifier

Have you ever dreamed of having a green thumb? Do you have questions about gardening? Would you like to start a family planting project in your own backyard? Then this free app will help you to get started. Using the Picture This app you will have access to plant guides, advice from Botanists, a large data base to help you identify plants, flowers, and trees. This app is sure to give you some inspiration and knowledge to create a garden oasis in your own backyard. <https://www.picturethisai.com/>

Leaf Identifier

This link will allow you to choose from a variety of different sites that show images of leaves and identifies the trees they come from. You will be able to find photographs of real leaves, charts, and beginner guides to identifying tree species. As a family you can research this site before you go on your nature walk or use it as a research tool to identify leaves you have come across during your walk.

<https://bit.ly/3kWw6qV>



Birds Canada

Birds Canada is Canada's national bird conservation organization. This link will take you to an information packed website. You will find podcasts and videos, information articles, Bird Identification Tool, a Junior Birder Guide, and many fun family crafts and activities. <https://www.birdscanada.org/>

Bird Identifier

Just ask Merlin! This online tool is easy to use whether you are a bird enthusiasts or a beginning birder. This site will guide you through identifying the birds in your area. Also on this site you can explore bird songs and calls by comparing your recording to the songs and calls from Merlin's data base. Next time you are on a nature walk make sure you pack your binoculars and stop to listen to the bird songs. <https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/>

iNaturalist Species Identifier

This App is free and very easy to navigate. Anyone with a computer or smartphone with Internet can use iNaturalist. This app focuses on Species Identification. It also gives you the platform to track and learn about invasive species as well as record and identify sounds you might hear on your adventure. Even if you are a beginner naturalist this app will help you connect with nature.

<https://inaturalist.ca/pages/about-inaturalist-canada-en>



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We hope you enjoyed your Outdoor Adventures!



If you're sharing your outdoor adventures
on social media, please hashtag us!

#FamilyDayOpenDoors