

LEAF COLLECTIONS, WIND DIRECTIONS, INSECT INVESTIGATIONS:

Ideas for Families Exploring Nearby Nature Together



ON A WINDY DAY

- Run with the wind! Make a pair of cardboard or fabric wings and try flapping. Now run against the wind. How does it feel different?
- Bring out an old sheet and make a sail by holding the corners together, letting the wind fill the fabric. What does it feel like?
- Watch the clouds in the wind. Look for the cloud's shadow. Can you run as fast as the cloud?
- Make a **nature kite** by tying leaves, sticks, and more to strings. Which design flies the best?
- Make a stick boat with leaf sails to catch the wind. Float them down a stream and compare different designs.
- Use the hollow stem of dandelions as a bubble wand and watch bubbles dance in the wind.
- Make **peace flags** and watch the wind spread your well wishes.
- Dip a finger into water and then hold it up high to feel the air. Can you tell which direction the wind is coming from?
- Make a **wind chime**. Close your eyes and listen to the different sounds.



- Help milkweed seeds disperse! How far can you help them travel?



- Be on the lookout for **migrating raptors** riding the wind south!



MATERIALS TO HAVE ON HAND

- Hand Lens
- Binoculars
- Bug boxes (recycled plastic jars, **Port-a-bug, two-way magnifying viewer**)
- Rake
- Wheelbarrow
- Mortar and pestle
- Crayons
- Watercolors
- Clipboards and paper
- Tick key**
- Muffin tins, pots, pans, mugs, bowls, plate, potato masher, spoons, tongs, spatula, colander, funnel, whisk, rolling pin, turkey baster, ice cream scoop and/or other used kitchen supplies for mud kitchen



RECOMMENDED GEAR

- Rubber boots (rain boots) or multi-season insulated boots (ex Bogs)
- Jacket/sweatshirt
- Rain Suit (or rain pants & rain coat with hood)
- Rain mittens
- Sun hat

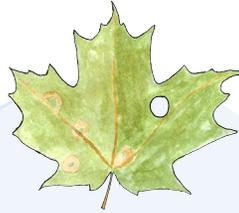


OUT IN YOUR YARD OR IN NEARBY NATURE

- Rake leaves into a maze or spiral. Put a special treasure at the end for someone to find.
- Fill a wheelbarrow with leaves. Dump them into a big pile and jump in!
- Preserve your favorite leaves by dipping them in wax and make a fall crown or hanging mobile.
- Collect stones and look at them closely with a hand lens. How do they feel in your hands? Try building with the stones, maybe a tower or a tiny house!
- Find a special stick and see how many things you can transform it into.
- Play “the ground is lava” - you can only step on certain colored leaves (or only on rocks).
- Listen for snowy tree cricket chirps and figure out the temperature from their frequency.
- Find a stump puffball and incorporate it into a play or a special function for a fairy house.



- Try to find a mushroom in every color of the rainbow. Make a photo journal of all you find.



- Search for sugar maple leaves that look like they've been hole-punched and look closely for the camouflaged caterpillars who are doing the munching.

- Make a collection of fallen leaves and arrange them in a special way. Look at Andy Goldsworthy's art for inspiration.
- Use a mortar and pestle to crush apples and make apple juice! Try mashing other fruits, flowers, chalk - how do they transform? Wear a pair of safety goggles to keep your eyes safe.
- Harvest several deep burgundy clusters of sumac berries and make sumac tea!
- Collect cones, acorns, twigs, rocks and make your own nature carnival with different games. Perhaps throwing acorns into a hole in a tree, kicking cones through a stick goal, balancing on a rock with only one foot, or stick limbo!



- Look for woolly bear caterpillars. Of the 13 segments, how many are brown and how many are black? Can you find a pattern? Record your observations.



RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Non-Fiction

- Fascinating Fungi of New England* by Lawrence Millman
- I Face the Wind* by Vicki Cobb
- Counting on Fall: Math in Nature* by Lizann Flatt
- Look What I Did With a Leaf!* by Morteza E. Sohi
- Vermont Birds (Pocket Naturalist Guide)* by James Kavanagh
- Vermont Wildlife (Pocket Naturalist Guide)* by James Kavanagh
- Vermont Trees & Wildflowers (Pocket Naturalist Guide)* by James Kavanagh
- Our Apple Tree* by Görel Kristina Näslund
- The Mushroom Fan Club* by Elise Gravel

Fiction

- Not a Stick* by Antoinette Portis
- Ruby's Sword* by Jacqueline Veissid
- Leaf Man* by Lois Ehlert
- Yellow Time* by Lauren Stringer
- Goodbye Summer, Hello Autumn* by Kenard Pak
- The Very Last Leaf* by Stef Wade
- Sophie's Squash* by Pat Zietlow Miller
- Tiny, Perfect Things* by M.H. Clark
- Backyard Fairies* by Phoebe Wahl
- Fairy Houses* by Tracy Kane
- In the Leaves* by Huy Voun Lee
- A Log's Life* by Wendy Pfeffer
- Around One Log: Chipmunks, Spiders, and Creepy Insiders* by Anthony D. Fredericks
- A Walk Through Mushroom Town* by David Charpentier



LIST OF RESOURCES

Find links to all underlined resources on our website at:

www.fourwindsinstitute.org