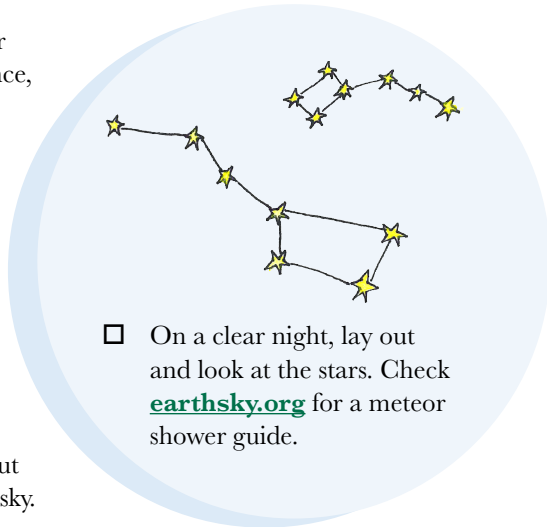


# SHADOW PLAYS, STREAM DAYS, COLOR FORAYS: *Ideas for Families Exploring Nearby Nature Together*

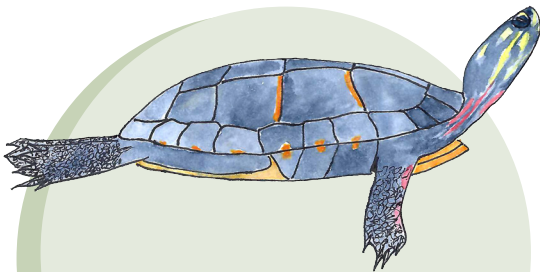


## ON A SUNNY DAY

- Experiment with shadows your body casts on the ground. Dance, wiggle, and make different shapes with your body! Trace your shadow with chalk on pavement or mark your head and feet with a stone. Watch your shadow change throughout the day.
- Make s'mores in a [solar oven](#).
- Pull out a picnic blanket and do some cloudspotting. Bring out your watercolors and paint the sky.



- On a clear night, lay out and look at the stars. Check [earthsky.org](http://earthsky.org) for a meteor shower guide.



- Look for animals sunbathing. Can you find turtles, dragonflies, and snakes basking in the sun?

- Make a [homemade water wall](#).
- Play a game of shadow tag! The goal is to tag the other players' shadows. Or spray bottle tag!



- Follow a butterfly until they alight in a sunny spot. Try to be as quiet as you can. How close can you get before the butterfly flutters off?

- Gather some rocks and sticks and [make sundials](#).
- Hang up a white sheet on a line and put on a shadow puppet play!



## MATERIALS TO HAVE ON HAND

- Hand Lens
- Bug boxes (recycled plastic jars, [Port-a-bug](#), [two-way magnifying viewer](#))
- Binoculars
- White Dish Basin
- Nets
- Crayons
- Watercolors
- Clipboards and paper
- Spray bottle
- [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



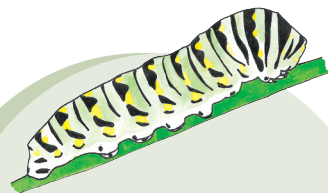
## RECOMMENDED GEAR

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



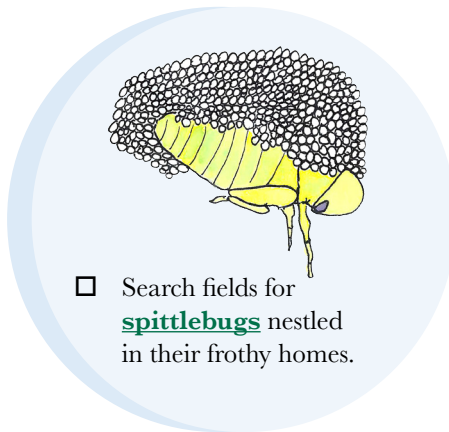
## OUT IN YOUR YARD OR IN NEARBY NATURE

- Visit a nearby pond. Close your eyes and listen to the pond sounds. Scoop up some water in a white dish basin and see what's living in the pond.
- Look for the colors of summer. Take a box of crayons outside and go on a scavenger hunt to find something natural that matches each color. Use the crayon to draw it.
- Build fairy houses. Leave them somewhere special for little creatures to find.
- Put on your mud boots and follow a nearby riverbank upstream as far as you can. Make a map of your journey!



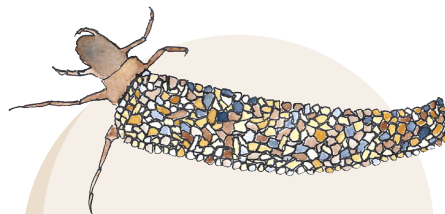
- Look for caterpillars and draw pictures of the moths and butterflies you imagine they'll turn into. Then look at a [caterpillar guide](#) and compare.

- Write haiku or other poems on slips of paper and hang on a favorite tree in celebration of the Summer Solstice!
- Shrink yourself down to the size of an ant. Get low to the ground and go on a microhike, thinking about the world from the perspective of an ant.



- Search fields for [spittlebugs](#) nestled in their frothy homes.

- Gently catch some grasshoppers. Observe them on a white sheet before letting them go. Try moving like a grasshopper yourself!
- Make a [plant press](#) and add some summer blooms to your nature journal.
- Watch a bee travel from flower to flower. Can you see the bee's [pollen baskets](#)?
- Hide a fun little treasure and mark the hiding spot on a map. Share the treasure hunt!
- Transform yourself into a beaver and experiment making a dam across a small stream. Make sure to let the stream return to the natural flow after investigating.



- Wade into a nearby stream to see what critters are living under the rocks! [Look them up.](#)



## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

### Non-Fiction

- Over and Under the Pond* by Kate Messner
- Animal Legs* by Mary Holland
- Begin with a Bee* by Liza Ketchum, Jacqueline Briggs Martin, and Phyllis Root
- Bug Butts* by Dawn Cusick
- Bug Safari* by Bob Barner
- Butterflies are Pretty...Gross!* by Rosemary Mosco
- A Butterfly is Patient* by Dianna Hutts Aston
- Are You a Bee/Ant/Dragonfly/Grasshopper/Ladybug/Snail/Spider/Beetle/Centipede/Butterfly* by Judy Allen
- Flowers are Pretty...Weird!* by Rosemary Mosco
- Shaping Up Summer: Math in Nature* by Lizann Flatt
- The Longest Day: Celebrating the Summer Solstice* by Wendy Pfeffer
- One Small Square: Pond* by Donald M. Silver
- Vermont Trees & Wildflowers (Pocket Naturalist Guide)* by James Kavanagh

### Fiction

- Crawdad Creek* by Scott Russell Sanders
- In the Small, Small Pond* by Denise Fleming
- In the Tall, Tall Grass* by Denise Fleming
- Near One Cattail* by Anthony D. Fredericks
- On One Flower* by Anthony D. Fredericks
- Song of the Water Boatman* by Joyce Sidman
- Butterfly Eyes and Other Secrets of the Meadow* by Joyce Sidman
- Backyard Fairies* by Phoebe Wahl



## LIST OF RESOURCES

Find links to all underlined resources on our website at:  
[www.fourwindsinstitute.org](http://www.fourwindsinstitute.org)