



Nature Study

Each Friday morning, you will go through two of our nature cards. They are labeled in the upper right corner with the corresponding week. These are short, factual cards with images to help your child become familiar with objects in the natural world.

As you progress through our sessions, you may find it handy to keep your past nature cards in a binder for easy reference when your children come across a familiar object. These seeds you are planting will grow into a wonderful garden of knowledge for your children in years to come.

As you explore nature outside your home, watch and listen for newly discovered delights. Most of all, remember...

"Point to some lovely flower or gracious tree, not only as a beautiful work, but as a beautiful thought of God."

~ Charlotte Mason

Nature Study

1

Persimmons *Diospyros virginiana*

- Persimmons are native to China.
- There are over 2,000 varieties, but only two are grown commercially.
- Persimmons are known to be a good source of vitamin C.
- They are in season during the fall to early winter.
- Astringent Hachiya persimmons are used often for baking.



1

English Mastiff *Canis lupus familiaris*

- English mastiffs are calm, gentle dogs despite their intimidating size and look.
- They give birth to 10 to 12 puppies at a time.
- English mastiffs live from 6 to 10 years.
- These pets can weigh up to 220 pounds. An English mastiff is actually the heaviest ever recorded dog in the Guinness Book of World Records.
- English mastiffs are not easily trained due to their stubborn and sensitive nature.



2

Pumpkins *Cucurbita*

- The name pumpkin comes from the Greek word "pepon" which means large melon.
- Pumpkins are actually classified as a fruit because they contain seeds.
- Antarctica is the only continent in the world that has no pumpkins.
- Honeybees are one of the most important parts of the pumpkin fertilization process as pollinators of the plants.
- Over one billion pounds of pumpkins are produced in the U.S. every year.



2

Horses *Equus caballus*

- There are more than 300 breeds of horses in the world today.
- Horses are herbivores, meaning they only eat plants.
- Horses can gallop at around 27 miles per hour.
- A male horse is known as a stallion. A female horse is a mare.
- Horses can sleep lying down or standing up.



3

Marigolds *Tagetes*

- The leaves of these plants are known to have a strong scent that keeps insect pests away.
- Marigolds are annual plants, meaning they only live for one year.
- There are 30 different types of marigolds.
- Marigolds are native to southwestern North America, South America, and Mexico.
- These plants are sensitive to the cold weather and cannot survive the frost.



3

Raccoons *Procyon lotor*

- Raccoons don't hibernate, but they do sleep for extended periods of time throughout the winter season.
- Raccoons are omnivores. They eat fruit, seeds, nuts, bird eggs, and plants. They are also known for scavenging through trash for scraps.
- Raccoons are excellent swimmers. Sometimes they swim to hunt for fish and frogs.
- Raccoons live up to three years in the wild. In captivity they can live up to twenty years.
- Raccoons are very fast. They use their speed to climb up trees when they sense danger.



4

Corn *Zea mays*

- Corn is a cereal crop and part of the grass family.
- An average ear of corn has 800 kernels in 16 rows.
- Corn is not only used in a wide variety of food items, but also in many non-food items such as, glue, fireworks, paint, etc.
- Corn is a completely domesticated plant, meaning it will not be found growing in the wild.
- Some consider corn to be a vegetable, but much of the world classifies it as a grain.

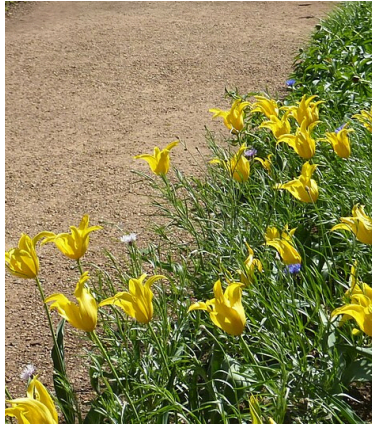


4

Mice *Mus musculus*

- Mice only live for about six months due to the large amount of predators that they have.
- A mouse eats 15-20 times a day.
- A mouse's tail can grow as long as their bodies.
- Mice are nocturnal animals.
- These creatures have poor eyesight, but a great sense of smell and good hearing to make up for it.





Tulips at Monticello 5

- Thomas Jefferson's estate, Monticello, had an extensive garden that is still cultivated to this day
- Tulips were brought over quickly to America and were grown by Dutch settlers as early as 1642.
- Tulips were some of the most prominent flowers grown in Jefferson's garden and were mentioned more frequently than other plants in Thomas Jefferson's Garden Book, which is a record of his horticultural diary (similar to a nature journal).
- The tulips grown in Monticello were of the striped variety, which was popular at the time, rather than solid colors.

*Image Source: MPSharwood, [WikiMedia Commons](#), cropped



Jefferson's Astronomical Case Clock 5

- Thomas Jefferson witnessed a lunar eclipse in 1778 that intrigued him so much, he planned to buy an astronomical clock, a device that was so precise it could help him make astronomical observations.

This purchase had to be put on hold due to the Revolutionary War, which lasted until 1783.

- 30+ years later, Jefferson commissioned the clock from clockmaker Thomas Voight, instructing that it be made without ornamentation.
- The clock was completed in 1812 and shipped to Jefferson in 1815. He kept the astronomical clock in his private study and frequently used it.
- An astronomical clock was such a special, high-tech piece for the time, so it was typically only found in observatories and scientific institutions, not in homes, making Jefferson's clock a rare luxury.

*Image Source: JBandJohnK, [WikiMedia Commons](#), unchanged



Jefferson's Great Claw 6

Megalonyx Jeffersonii

- Thomas Jefferson had an immense interest in fossils and collected specimens throughout his life. One such example was a fossil that he deemed "the great claw" or "Megalonyx," pictured on the left.
- This fossil came from the United States and was of an unknown species. At first, Jefferson believed it was the claw of a particularly massive lion. As time went on, he realized it was closer to a sloth and reclassified it accordingly.
- He was right! In 1804, Jefferson was given credit for discovering a previously unknown species- Jefferson's ground sloth, also known as the *Megalonyx jeffersonii*, named in honor of Jefferson himself.
- *Megalonyx jeffersonii* was about the size of a cow, and fed primarily on plants, standing on its hind limbs to grasp at tall vegetation with its claws.



Lewis and Clark Expedition 6

- When Thomas Jefferson became president of the United States in 1801, he took a vested interest in the exploration of American territories, including the addition of new land he had acquired in the Louisiana Purchase.
- Thus, Jefferson commissioned and funded the famous Lewis and Clark expedition, which began in 1804 and lasted until 1806, taking about two and a half years. The aim of the expedition was to explore these new territories and chart them, collecting samples of previously undiscovered herbs, fossils, and plants along the way.
- The expedition was a major breakthrough in American natural science, and Lewis and Clark were able to bring back many samples ranging from various soils, plants, herbs, fossils, and furs, as well as some live animals such as a prairie dog! These scientific discoveries were carefully recorded and helped inform the American public of the unique animals and plants native to the United States.