



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

Sugar Maple *Acer saccharum*

- Sugar Maples are native to the hardwood forests of eastern Canada
- They normally reach heights of 80-120 ft.

- The Native Americans used the inner bark as a cough remedy, and they used the sap as a sweetening agent and to make maple syrup
- Sugar Maple wood is used in making bowling pins, violins, and guitar necks.
- 40 liters of maple sap, once boiled, only make 1 liter of pure syrup.
- Learn more about how to identify and tap your own maple trees here:
<https://www.laramolettieri.com/maple-syrup-at-home/>



1

White Oak *Quercus alba*

- One of the preeminent hardwoods of eastern and central North America.
- Typically reaches heights of 80 to 100 feet.

- The acorns are eaten by many animals because they are less bitter and smaller than other oak trees.
- The white oak is the only known food plant of the *Bucculatrix Luteella* and *Bucculatrix ochrixuffusa* caterpillars.
- The tree itself isn't white, it is light grey. The name comes from the color of the finished wood.
- The tree begins flowering in May, acorns are fully developed around September.



2

Acorns *Family: Quercus*

- The acorn, or oak nut, is the nut of the oaks
- Wildlife that consume acorns as an important part of their diets include birds, mice, pigs, and deer.

- Acorns served an important role in early human history and were a source of food for many cultures around the world. For instance, the Ancient Greeks and the Japanese would eat acorns, especially in times of famine.
- Acorns have frequently been used as a coffee substitute, the Confederates in the American Civil War and Germans during World War II, were particularly notable instances of acorns in history
- Acorns were a traditional food of many indigenous peoples of North America.



2

Eastern Gray Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*

- Eastern Gray Squirrels are native to Eastern United States
- Typically grey, sometimes with a brownish tint. White or black colors have been seen in big cities.

- They hide food in many stashes and can have up to a thousand stashes in one season.
- If they have an abundance of food that year, mothers can have two litters, which have around 1 - 4 babies.
- The life expectancy of a wild gray squirrel is 1 - 2 years.
- Grey squirrels eat a variety of things, from tree bark to tomatoes to frogs.
- Grey squirrels were introduced to Britain in the 1870's, and are now considered an invasive species all across Europe.



3

Jack in the Pulpit *Arisaema triphyllum*

- It's pollinated by flies, which are attracted by the smell.
- Jack in the Pulpit is poisonous.
- If the plant is properly dried or cooked it can be eaten as a root vegetable.
- Native Americans used a prepared version of this plant to medicate sore eyes, rheumatism, bronchitis, and snakebites.
- Jack in the Pulpit is often confused with Poison Ivy.
- It takes 3 - 4 years for the plant to become large enough to flower.
- Jack in the Pulpit is also called bog onion, brown dragon, Indian turnip, American wake robin, or wild turnip



3

Hen of the Woods *Grifola frondosa*

- Polypore mushroom, also called bracket fungi.
- Hen of the Woods grows in clusters at the base of trees, particularly Oak trees.
- This fungus is native to China.
- Hen of the Woods often grows in the same spots for many years.
- One of the most used mushrooms in Japanese cuisine, called *maitake* or "dancing mushroom."
- It is also known for its medicinal uses, it can boost the immune system, and it has anticancer properties.



4

Wild Turkey *Meleagris gallopavo*

- They are native to eastern central United States.
- Turkeys have 5,000 - 6,000 feathers.
- Wild turkeys can fly up to a quarter of a mile.
- Wild turkeys are omnivorous, foraging on the ground or climbing shrubs and small trees to feed. They prefer acorns and nuts, but also eat bugs, lizards, and grass.
- Benjamin Franklin wanted to make the wild turkey as the national bird, because he thought the turkeys had more honor.
- The wild turkey plays a significant role in the cultures of many Native American tribes all over North America. Outside of the Thanksgiving feast, it is a favorite meal in eastern tribes.



4

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

- Known for their aggressive, territorial behavior, Canada geese can be considered a pest.
- The Canada goose is native to regions of North America. It has also been introduced to northern Europe, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Argentina, Chile, and the Falkland Islands.
- The Canada goose species was believed to be extinct in the 1950's until, in 1962, a small flock was discovered wintering in Rochester, Minnesota.
- Their autumn migration can be seen from September to the beginning of November.