



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



Common Ivy 1

Hedera helix

- Common ivy is a leafy vine that originates from Europe and Asia, though it has spread to many other parts of the world.
- Common ivy is evergreen, so it stays green and healthy throughout the year: flowering during

summer and autumn and producing berries in the winter, which serve as an excellent food source for birds.

- In Europe, ivy is often intentionally planted to grow on walls, serving as both decoration and a way to keep a building cool in summer and insulated in winter.
- Common ivy was used in folk medicine to treat coughs, and a component of the ivy leaf is still extracted and used in many modern cough medicines today.



Hawthorn 1

Crataegus monogyna

- Common hawthorn is a flowering bush or small tree that grows distinctive red fruit in the fall. Hawthorn plants are also known as “mayblossoms” because they usually flower in the late spring.

- Hawthorn fruit is often made into syrups, jellies, and jams, and is said to have a tart flavor with a bit of sweetness.

- In early Europe, hawthorn was believed to ward off witches and vampires, and was seen as a symbol of hope.

- One of the oldest known living hawthorns, the Hethel Old Thorn, is a tree in Norfolk, England, said to be over 700 years old!



Bluebell 2

Hyacinthoides non-scripta

- Bluebells are a violet-blue flowering plant native to Europe, though they can now be found in many parts of North America as well.
- Bluebells are commonly seen as the favorite flower of the UK.

- Bluebells can frequently be found carpeting the ground in ancient forests throughout the United Kingdom—particularly Britain and Ireland. These forests are known as “bluebell woods.”

- People in the Elizabethan era used starch found in the bulbs of bluebells to stiffen their collars and ruffs.



Stinging Nettle 2

Urtica dioica

- Nettle (also known as stinging nettle or burning nettle) is a leafy, flowered plant that grows in wet environments. Originally native to Europe, it can now be found all over the world.
- A common remedy for nettle is the jewelweed plant, which grows near it.

- Stinging nettle gets its name because it has many stinging hairs that grow on its stems, injecting painful chemicals into any animal or person that brushes against it. This acts as a defense mechanism for the plant, keeping it from getting eaten by predators.

- Beyond its reputation as a painful plant, nettle actually has many valuable medicinal properties, and has been used as a folk remedy for years, including all the way back to 1st century A.D. It’s still used in folk medicine today to treat allergies, arthritis, and skin conditions.



Red Fox 3

Vulpes vulpes

- The red fox is a mammal originating from Europe and Asia, though it has spread throughout many parts of the world, such as North Africa, Australia, and North America.
- Foxes are omnivores and will eat a variety of foods such as small rodents, berries, acorns, and birds.

- Baby foxes are known as kits, while female foxes are vixens and males are called dogs or tods.
- Red foxes are social creatures and are typically found in small family units or pairs. Red foxes mate for life and will usually spend the rest of their lives with their partner.
- Though red foxes typically live in rural environments, some have been known to live in urban places like suburbs and cities, scavenging food scraps they find. In 2006, 10,000 red foxes were estimated to live in London, England.



European Hedgehog 3

Erinaceus europaeus

- The European hedgehog is a small, spiny mammal native to Europe.
- They eat many insects, such as earthworms, beetles, snails, and crickets. They are much loved in European gardens because they eat many common garden pests.

- Hedgehogs have spines on their back, and will roll into a ball if threatened to deter predators from eating them.
- Hedgehogs are nocturnal and will usually only be found looking for food at night.
- European hedgehogs are on the decline in Great Britain due to factors such as habitat eradication, and many efforts are being made to encourage population growth. One such effort is making pathways through garden fences to enable them to move freely known as "hedgehog highways."



Ravens 4

Corvus corax

- Ravens are a black bird that lives in the Northern Hemisphere. They have a varied diet consisting of foods such as insects, berries, smaller birds, fruit, and will even scavenge dead animals.
- Ravens can live for 23 years or more in the wild, and often

mate for life, meaning that a bonded pair can live out many years together.

- Ravens are extremely intelligent birds and can mimic a variety of sounds, including human words. They are also very curious, and will often hoard small shiny objects like bits of metal or pebbles.
- A group of ravens are traditionally kept at the tower of London and cared for by a Ravenmaster, whose job it is to ensure they have everything they need. It is believed that their presence protects the Tower as well as the British monarchy, and if they were to ever get lost or leave, both Britain and the Crown would fall.



European Badger 4

Meles meles

- The European badger is a small mammal native to Europe and parts of Asia. They have a distinctive pattern of grey, black, brown, and white fur.
- European badgers are omnivores, and will often eat a range of foods such as worms,

smaller animals, bugs, and tubers.

- Badgers live in extensive burrows that often have multiple passageways, housing several badger families that live with one another. Sometimes, they will even share their burrows with other animals like red foxes or rabbits.
- They keep their burrows neat, even using certain sections as designated bathroom areas, and are often seen carrying soiled bedding out of the burrow and bringing in new, fresh material for nesting.