



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



Bamboo 1

Bambusoideae

- Bamboo is a type of tall, woody plant that grows in clusters and can reach heights of up to 151 feet.
- Though the stems of bamboo are woody like a tree, it is actually considered a type of grass.

- This is because, like grass, it has a hollow stem and will continue to grow after being cut.
- Because of the way it grows, bamboo is one of the fastest-growing plants in the world, and some species can even grow up to 35 inches in one day!
- Bamboo wood is used to build many things, such as bridges, houses, furniture, and even cooking utensils. Its shoots can also be cooked and eaten, making it a very versatile plant.



Plum Blossom 1

Prunus mume

- The Plum Blossom, also known as the Chinese Plum, or by its Latin name, *Prunus mume*, is a species of tree with beautiful pink, white, or red blossoms in the late winter and early spring.
- Despite being called a type of plum, these plants are actually

a type of apricot, and the fruit, which is very tart, turns yellow or red when ripe.

- Plum Blossom flowers are thought to represent endurance and perseverance because they bloom so early in the year, before nearly any other plant.
- The Chinese Plum is deeply important in Chinese culture, and has been used in art, literature, medicine, and cooking for centuries. It is even used in teas, sauces, and juices, or sometimes dried or pickled.



Lotus 2

Nelumbo

- Lotus, or *Nelumbo*, are a type of flowering plant that lives in the water.
- The flowers and leaves float on or above the surface of the water, while the roots disappear below, embedded in the mud at the bottom of the water.

- In China, lotuses symbolize longevity. This is because lotus seeds can produce plants many, many years after they are produced, with the oldest known seed germination coming from seeds found in China that were over 1,300 years old!
- Lotus have been grown by humans for over 3,000 years for their edible seeds and roots (as well as their ornamental beauty).
- One type of Chinese lotus, the qian ban lian, meaning "thousand petals lotus," can have over 3,000 - 4,000 petals on a single flower.



Ginkgo Tree 2

Ginkgo biloba

- The Ginkgo tree, also known as the maidenhair tree, is a species of tree that is considered a "living fossil" because it has been around for about 170 million years.
- The species it came from - Ginkgoales, has been

around for even longer, and originated about 290 million years ago. The ginkgo tree is the last surviving plant from this order.

- Ginkgos are incredibly hardy trees and can live for thousands of years. The oldest known ginkgo trees are thought to be over 3,500 years old.
- Though ginkgo trees were once thought extinct, it was discovered that several plants are still growing wild in the mountains of southwestern China, and they are now often grown purposefully in cities and gardens all over the world, particularly in East Asia.



Tea Plant 3

Camellia sinensis

- The tea plant, also called the tea shrub or tea tree, is a type of shrub (or small tree) from East Asia. As its name indicates, its leaves, stems, and buds are used to create tea.
- Tea bushes become most productive at 30-50 years, and can keep creating leaves for tea for over 100 years.
- A wide variety of teas can be made from its leaves: black tea, oolong, green tea, yellow tea, white tea, and a type of fermented tea called dark tea are all created from this versatile plant. Kukicha, a twig tea, is even made using its stems.
- The Latin name, *Camellia sinensis*, has a two-part meaning. "Sinensis" means "from China," while *Camellia* is named after a famous pharmacist and missionary.
- According to Chinese legend, tea was invented by an emperor thousands of years ago, when leaves from this bush mistakenly fell into his boiling water.



Jasmine 3

Jasminum officinale

- Jasmine is a type of flowering shrub or vine that grows in the warm climates of Europe, Asia, Africa, and Oceania, though it likely originated in Southeast and South Asia.
- Jasmine flowers are usually formed in clusters of three or more blossoms, and they are typically white or yellow.
- These small blossoms have a distinctively sweet smell, and because of this, jasmine has been planted and grown for use in perfumes, soaps, teas, and more for centuries.
- In China, jasmine's scent is thought to be what heaven smells like.
- Jasmine is used in a traditional Chinese tea to add its unique fragrance to the leaves, a method that has been around since the fifth century.



Rice Plant 4

Oryza sativa

- The rice plant, *Oryza sativa* (or Asian cultivated rice, as it is sometimes known), is a type of grass that produces the most common forms of rice in the world.
- A lesser-known variety of the rice plant is the *Oryza glaberrima*, or African rice.
- What we know as "rice" is really the grains, or the edible seeds, of the rice plant. These grains are harvested when they turn yellow and hard, and then milled to break down the tough outer layers.
- Asian rice was first cultivated by the Chinese some 9,000 years ago, and China continues to be the world's top rice consumer, with India and Indonesia following.
- Rice plants can grow around 30-45 inches tall, and it typically takes about 6 months after planting for them to be ready to harvest.



Chinese White Pine 4

Pinus armandii

- The Chinese white pine (or alternatively, the Armand's pine or the Mount Hua pine) is a type of evergreen pine tree that originated in China.
- The tree can grow up to 115 feet tall, and the trunk can reach over 3 feet wide!
- Much like other varieties of pine, its leaves are needle-like and grow in clusters, and it produces cones with seeds inside that can be roasted and eaten.
- Because it is evergreen, the Chinese white pine has come to symbolize longevity in Chinese culture, and in ancient China, many people consumed the tree's resin (its sap) because it was thought to grant a long life.



Giant Panda 5

Ailuropoda melanoleuca

- Giant pandas, also known as pandas or panda bears, are a type of bear from China. Pandas are exclusive to China, and can only be found in the wild there.
- Pandas have a special thumb on their front paws that helps them keep their food of choice, bamboo, in place while they eat it.

- Giant pandas are white with distinctive black markings around their eyes, ears, shoulders, and legs. They are large and round, weighing around 220-254 lbs when fully grown.
- Pandas are found in the slopes of mountains at high elevations, and usually live by themselves rather than in a group. They raise their young until they are between 18 and 24 months old, then venture off alone once more.

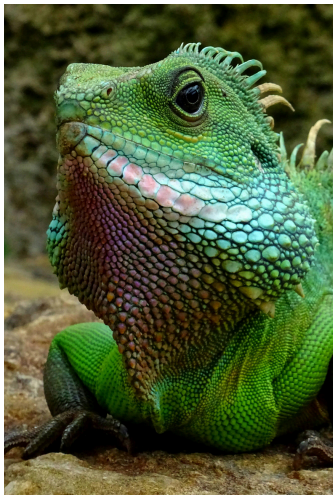


Golden Snub-Nosed Monkey 5

Rhinopithecus roxellana

- The golden snub-nosed monkey, or the Sichuan golden hair monkey, as it is called in China, is a type of primate that can only be found living in the wild in a small region of China.

- Golden snub-nosed monkeys live in mountainous forests, and because it often snows in their climate, they are incredibly resistant to the cold, withstanding it better than any other type of non-human primate.
- These monkeys spend most of their time in trees, and about 97% of their life is lived above the ground in forest canopies.
- They are primarily herbivores, eating mostly lichen, though their diets change with the season.



Chinese Water Dragon 6

Physignathus cocincinus

- The Chinese water dragon, or the Asian water dragon as it is also known, is a species of large green lizards that come from Southern China and Southeast Asia.
- Young Chinese water dragons have turquoise or bright

green stripes that can fade as they grow older.

- They live in thick subtropical forests and divide their time between living in the trees and on the ground. They often sleep in the branches of trees near streams so they can fling themselves into the water to escape predators if needed.
- Chinese water dragons are omnivores, but primarily eat snails, eggs, insects, and smaller animals.



Domesticated Silk Moth 6

Bombyx mori

- The domestic silk moth, also known by its Latin name, *Bombyx mori*, is a species of moth with a white, fuzzy body and small 1-2 inch wings.
- The silk moth has been domesticated by humans and is raised to produce

silk, a fabric that is created from the fibers of its cocoons.

- Silk moths start life inside a small egg, which they then hatch from as small larvae called "silkworms." Once they grow large enough, they spin a cocoon around themselves with special threads they create, then emerge later as fully grown silk moths.
- Domestic silk moths are unable to sustain flight, as their wings are too small to carry their large bodies. Adult silk moths also have very small mouths and cannot eat, so they only live for short periods of time once they reach maturity.