



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



Connemara Pony 1

Equus caballus

- The Connemara Pony is Ireland's only unique horse breed.
- They have amazing dispositions, thus being perfect riding horses for children. These loving ponies form such a strong bond with their owners that they can remember their owner's voice or appearance even after years of separation.
- Averaging 14 to 14.2 hands, these equines are amazing sports ponies, having exemplary endurance and jumping qualities. A 22 year old Connemara pony named The Nugget jumped 7ft. and 2in. in a horse show.
- Ireland annually hosts the Connemara Pony Show, where their talented horses show off their skills.
- The Connemara Pony usually live late into their 30's.



Wildflower 1

Irish Eyebright

Euphrasia salisburgensis

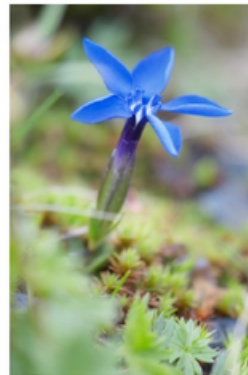
- The upper lip of this flower has two lobes and the bottom lip has three.
- It flowers in June-October months.
- This is an annual flower, meaning it goes through its whole life cycle in one growing season.
- It has been used (and is still used by some) for the medicinal purpose of curing eye problems, making them 'bright' once again.
- It is partly parasitic, meaning that it not only makes its own food, but takes nutrients from other plants. They live such short lives, they really do not do any lasting harm.
- It has a base color of white, but it has pretty characteristics carefully drawn on its snowy petals, with light hints of lilac on the white petals, straight streaks of purple, and its yellow splotch that almost always shows itself on this beautiful eyebright.



Irish Wolfhound 2

Canis lupus familiaris

- Interestingly, the Irish Wolfhound is the tallest breed of dog in the world!
- An Irish king named Cormac mac Airt had an army of 300 Wolfhounds. In battle, these dogs could drag men out of their chariots and off horses!
- They were also used as hunting dogs and accompanied an independent Irish warrior group called the Fianna to hunt big animals in big quantities, actually driving some species to extinction.
- Irish wolfhounds live about 8-10 years.
- Irish Wolfhounds have been around for a long time, since around 391 A.D.
- Interestingly, with all these fighting qualities, Irish Wolfhounds make terrible guard dogs.
- They welcome newcomers, thinking of them as friends they just haven't yet met.



Irish Wildflower 2

Gentian

Gentiana verna

- They can grow to be 4-6cm tall.
- It is a perennial, meaning it lives for over two years.
- It flowers in May-June months.
- It has a little white 'throat' in the center of the flower.
- It is classified as near threatened.
- The flowers form a rosette, which in botany terms means that the leaves (or structures that look like leaves) form a circle.



Puffin 3

Fratercula arctica

- They can fly at speeds of 55mph!
- They are only 25cm in length!
- The puffin's beak varies in size and color through its stages of life. During the breeding season, the puffin's beak turns a bright orange, but when the breeding season is over, they shed the beautiful outer bill, showing the duller beak beneath. This also makes the puffin's beak smaller. As they get older, though, the beak gets bigger and bigger.
- Very few birds have the amazing ability the puffin does, it being able to hold 10-12 fish in its mouth at one time!
- Puffins usually mate for life, and have only one egg per year.
- They love the sea, spending most of their time relaxing or swimming amongst the waves..



Greater Butterfly Orchid 3

Platanthera chlorantha

- They grow to be 25-60cm tall.
- A spike, in botany terms, is the stem of a plant which lacks branches. The Greater Butterfly Orchid has this characteristic.
- They have a stronger fragrance during the nighttime.
- A spur in botany terms is, by definition, a long tissue growth on different organs of a plant.
- They look like very long petals on this flower, but spurs are actually used for storing nectar.
- It is best to see them in June and July, the time of year these beautiful flowers blossom.
- The different colors these flowers come in are white/yellow to a greenish look.



Eurasian Pygmy Shrew 4

Sorex minutus

- These cute little guys don't live for very long. Their lifespan is only 16-17 months.
- Interestingly, these shrews eat 125% of their body weight in food every day. It has to eat about every two hours because of their high metabolism, which is one of the fastest of all animals.
- They are the smallest mammals in Ireland.
- Eurasian Pygmy Shrews have iron on parts of their teeth, making those areas red, and increasing durability.
- They only weigh an average of 4 grams, which is about the same weight as three- four paperclips.
- This animal eats insects and arachnids, using its long nose to prowl around in search of its 'delicious' meal.



Globeflower 4

Trollius europaeus

- Can grow to be 60cm.
- They are perennial flowers, meaning they live for more than two years.
- The best time to see these flowers is May-July.
- Ten sepals make the globe shape of this flower, the actual petals being inside the globe. A sepal is a modified leaf, used to keep the inner bud safe and to attract bugs.
- Can be yellow, orange, or cream.
- The globeflower fly is the main pollinator.