



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

Red Squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*

- Red squirrels have two toes and four fingers on each paw.
- Red squirrels have the ability to swim.
- The nest that a red squirrel makes is called a drey and is usually found in a tree hollow or log.
- Red squirrels are very defensive about their territories.
- These small creatures are very vocal creatures, screeching and squeaking to communicate.



1

Scotch Thistle *Onopordum acanthium*

- This plant is biennial, meaning it takes two years to complete its life cycle.
- It is also known as the "cotton thistle."
- It is the national flower of Scotland and can be seen in much more than just gardens. You can spot them throughout the countryside, at homes, and in parks.
- The thistle grows like a weed, with the leaves, roots, and stems growing in its first year and the plant flowers in the second year.
- Thistles have very sharp thorns, making them very dangerous if you're not familiar with them.



2

Scottish Wildcat *Felis silvestris silvestris*

- Scottish wildcats eat grass sometimes in order to fight off the parasites they regularly contract.
- They usually bury their poop unless they are trying to communicate. If they are, they will sometimes leave it out in order to mark their territory.
- These mammals can live up to 7 years in the wild and 15 in captivity.
- Scottish wildcats are very fearful of humans and avoid contact with them. When nearby, they usually become very aggressive due to feeling threatened.
- Scottish wildcats are a crepuscular species, meaning they are most active at dawn and dusk.



2

Gorse *Ulex*

- Gorse can bloom all year long, but the blooming reaches its peak in the fall and spring.
- The flowers on the gorse shrub have a coconut scent, which smells good to us and attracts many insects for pollination.
- Its name comes from the Old English word "gorst," meaning uncultivated areas. These uncultivated areas are where gorse shrubs usually grow.
- Gorse shrubs produce yellow flowers that are sometimes used for dyes.
- Gorse is a perennial plant, meaning it has a long lifespan.



3

Weasel *Mustela*



- Weasels can kill prey that is larger than their own bodies.
- They often take down rabbits or squirrels.
- It is not uncommon for weasels to sneak into chicken coops and eat their eggs.
- Weasels have many predators, including owls and snakes.
- There are seventeen different species of weasels.
- Weasels are skilled climbers, runners, and swimmers.

3

Shetland Mouse-ear *Cerastium nigrescens*



- This plant was first recorded by Thomas Edmondston, who was only twelve when he spotted it in 1837.
- Another popular name for the Shetland mouse-ear is "Edmondston's Chickweed."
- Shetland Mouse-ear is an endemic plant.
- The leaves and stems of the plant are a purplish color and are covered in hair.
- This plant means a lot to the country of Scotland and is protected under Scotland's Wildlife and Countryside Act.

4

Earless Seal *Phocidae*



- Earless seals are the only seals that live in the extreme polar regions of the world.
- Earless seals have been hunted quite regularly for their hides or oil, resulting in some of these species nearly being exterminated by mankind.
- Earless seals actually do have ears, but they aren't easily spotted at first sight.
- These sleek creatures are specialized for life in the water but spend time on the dry land when it's time to breed.
- Earless seals communicate by slapping the water and making grunting noises.

4

Bog Myrtle *Myrica gale*



- Bog myrtle is a small, woody shrub that usually only grows about 2 meters high.
- Some refer to bog myrtle as "sweet gale" because of the sweet smell that comes from rubbing its leaves in your hand.
- Bog myrtle is hard to spot in the wintertime because its leaves disappear.
- Bog myrtle is a great plant to combine with citronella to repel insects.
- The name bog myrtle is due to it growing in bogs, marshes, and other wetland areas.