

Greater Cincinnati®

GROW OUTSIDE

A GUIDE TO OUTDOOR PLAY

Turn
over
a new
leaf!



Leave
No Child
Inside

Greater Cincinnati ©

www.LNClgc.org



Dear Reader:

Do you remember when parents told their children to “Go Outside and Play”? A time when unstructured play in nature built healthy bodies, encouraged creativity and a sense of wonder, relieved stress, facilitated learning and developed important social skills?

In the relatively short span of twenty to thirty years, we have removed our children from the natural environment that so effectively nurtured healthy child development. When Richard Louv published his book “*Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*” in 2005, he issued a call to action for the parents and mentors of today to return children to the healthy, outdoor lifestyle that has prevailed throughout human evolution.

We hope this guide will inspire you to encourage today’s children to **“GO OUTSIDE AND PLAY”!! !**

Leave No Child Inside-
Greater Cincinnati

A Message from Richard Louv...

Author, *Last Child in the Woods:*

Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder



Today, kids are well aware of the global threats to their environment, but their physical contact, their intimacy with nature on a day-to-day basis, is fading.

A fifth-grader in a San Diego classroom put it succinctly: “I like to play indoors better ‘cause that’s where all the electrical outlets are.”

I believe our society is teaching young people to avoid direct experience in nature. That unintended message is delivered by schools, families, even organizations devoted to the outdoors, and codified into the legal and regulatory structures of many of our communities – effectively banning much of the kind of play that we enjoyed as children. Our institutions, urban/suburban design and cultural attitudes unconsciously associate nature with doom, while disassociating the outdoors from joy and solitude. Well-meaning public school systems, media and parents are scaring children straight out of the woods and fields.

Many parents are aware of the change, and they sense its importance. When asked, they cite a number of everyday reasons why their children spend less time in nature than they themselves did, including disappearing access to natural areas, competition from television and computers, dangerous traffic, more homework and other time pressures. Most of all, parents cite fear of stranger-danger, as round-the-clock news coverage conditions them to believe in an epidemic of child-snatchings, despite evidence that the number has been falling for years.

As a result, children’s worlds, limitless in cyberspace, are shrinking in reality. As the nature deficit grows, new studies demonstrate just how important direct contact with the outdoors is to healthy human development. Most of the new evidence that connects nature to well-being and restoration has focused on adults, but during the past decade, scientists have begun to study the impact of nature on child development. Environmental psychologists reported in 2003 that nature in or around the home, or simply a room with a view of a natural landscape, helped protect the psychological well-being of the children.

Researchers have found that children with disabilities gain enhanced body image and positive behavior changes through direct interaction with nature. Studies of outdoor education programs geared toward troubled youth – especially those diagnosed with mental health problems – show a clear therapeutic value. Some of the most intriguing studies are being done by the Human-Environment Research Laboratory at the University of Illinois, where researchers have discovered that children as young as five showed a significant reduction in the symptoms of Attention-Deficit Disorder when they engaged with nature. Could nature therapy be a new option for ADD treatment?

Meanwhile, the California-based State Education and Environmental Roundtable, a national effort to study environment-based education, found that schools that use outdoor classrooms, among other techniques, produce student gains in social studies, science, language arts and math; improved standardized test scores and grade-point averages; and enhanced skills in problem-solving, critical thinking and decision-making. In addition, evidence suggests that time in natural surroundings stimulates children's creativity.

People who care about children and the future of the environment need to know about such research, but for the most part, they do not. Today we see dramatic increases in childhood obesity, attention difficulties and depression. When these issues are discussed at the conference table or the kitchen table, direct childhood experience in nature is seldom mentioned. Yet, the growing nature deficit experienced by today's children, and potentially for generations to come, may be the most important common denominator.

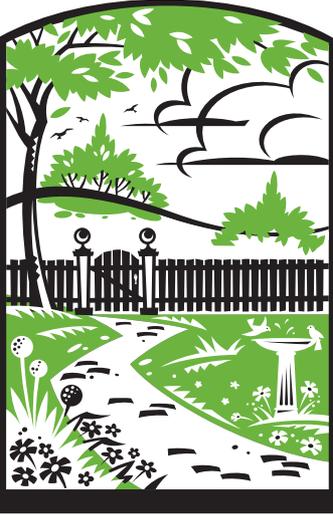
I am not suggesting that we bring back the free-range childhood of the 1950s. Those days are over. But, with a deeper understanding of the importance of nature play to healthy child development, and to their sense of connection to the world, we can create safe zones for nature exploration. We can preserve the open space in our cities, and even design and build new kinds of communities, using the principles of green urbanism. We can weave nature therapy into our health-care system, natural experiences into our classrooms. In education, we can build a No Child Left Inside movement.

And, we can challenge environmental organizations to take this issue seriously. For if the disconnection between children and nature continues, who will become the future stewards of the earth – and who will swing on birches?

Richard Louv, Author

*Last Child in the Woods:
Saving our Children from
Nature-Deficit Disorder*

The Child-Friendly



*Take a minute
and imagine!
Sit back, relax &
close your eyes...*

Imagine that you are the same age
as your child...

What grade were you in?
Who was your teacher?
Your best friend?
Favorite game?

Imagine that you are outside. ...

Did you have a place that you
considered your own...
a treehouse or
a fort in the bushes?

***Remember that special place where, besides listening
for your mom's voice, your imagination was the limit?
Did you build hide outs or homes for your toys? Catch
rollypollies or fireflies? What did you feel, see, smell or
hear?***

***Remember how good you were at having fun? Your
child is gifted with the same skill!
Now that you've loosened up your imagination, join us
in encouraging kids to use theirs!***

Backyard

First, let go of preconceived notions of an outdoor play area. As a society, we have designated concrete, plastic and metal areas as the appropriate places to play. Were those your favorite childhood play areas? It's more likely that you preferred a secret hideaway under the bushes, rolling down a grassy slope or using your imagination to build a fort. By encouraging children to see the potential in their backyards and other outdoor spaces, we allow them endless, undefined and undiscovered fun.

Define safety.

Create rules for outdoor safety so children can be free within your specified boundaries. Rather than clearing away all risks (which is nearly impossible), help your children to learn caution and respect. Do your own work outside while your kids are playing. Put away your tools after using them, but also give your children appropriate and useful tools for their “work”. Teach them to observe and respect wildlife. Let them know what plants are useful and how (i.e. what is edible and that everything else is not). Get rid of poisonous plants. Do not use garden chemicals.



Allow kids to discover and use found resources.

Using objects available in nature, such as sticks and stones, to build hideouts for toys and landmarks for play will develop a child's creativity, teach them to be resourceful, build their confidence and heighten their awareness of nature's abundance. The Brooklyn Botanic Garden built collection boxes where children can collect pine cones, berries, etc. As you're cleaning the garden or yard, designate a place to collect useful sticks and stones that your children can use in their play.

Set aside some space.

You don't have to give your hopes of enjoying the backyard over to plastic sandboxes and swing sets. Designate areas for play and give control of those areas to your child's imagination! Allow your children space to dig, but hide it from view with a tall grass. Create a sand pit right in your landscape. Leave yard space for running or create a circular path – kids won't think negatively about running in circles, but will enjoy the rush of physical activity.



Create spaces.

Children are amazing; they will take a stretch of bushes and turn it into a “jungle” or turn an old tire into the center piece of a “junkyard”. It doesn't take much, but there are ways you can facilitate such a transformation. Create corners and nooks in your garden; lay out winding pathways; plant tall grasses and weeping trees; add a bubbling fountain; use a working gate to create the illusion of entering a different part of the yard; designate a hardwood tree with low branches as the climbing tree; plant bean teepees and giant sunflowers; leave a large boulder or a fallen log for climbing. Creating these inviting coves will be as much fun for you as for your children.



Invite other creatures.

There is a natural fascination with the world beyond our own. Children will spend hours looking for dirt creatures, admiring a butterfly's colors, watching a bee dance from flower to flower, or laughing at a squirrel's chase. Teaching your children to observe and respect living things will equip them with relational skills they can use throughout life. Plant fruit, nut and seed bearing plant and put out a basin of water for birds. Compost your yard waste to keep a high population of roly pollies and worms. All living things need food, water and shelter; providing these things through your yardscape is a great invitation for all sorts of creatures.

Exercise your child's green thumb.

Give your children space where they are in charge. It is a great idea to grow food so children can plant seeds, nurture the plant growth and taste the fruits of their labor. You can create theme gardens such as: an alphabet garden (with plants representing every letter), an animal garden (with plants like elephant ears, bee balm, or lamb's ears), or a color garden (plant red tomatoes, red cabbage, and red peppers). An herb garden with different mints, basil and other plants can develop your children's awareness of different smells and tastes. Fast growing cutting flowers like zinnias and cosmos are always fun and beautiful, and a strawberry patch will stay in your children's memory. You can start by growing a few plants in containers so the gardening is manageable and rewarding for your children. Choose plants you like and will use in cooking or decorating.



Expect some damage.

As children claim your outdoor space as the ideal place to play, they will get dirty and not treat plants with a tender distance. Encourage your children to wear play clothes. "Bath nights" can follow days of outdoor play. Use hardy plants in your garden along pathways and where your children play.



Enjoy the joy!

When your child begins to discover and enjoy nature, you're bound to hear all about it! Show your child that you're interested in hearing about their adventures: ask provoking questions, encourage them and share your own experiences. Most of all, join with your child in the spirit of appreciation, wonder and joy!

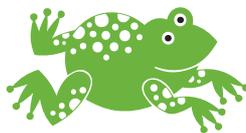


Photo courtesy Cincinnati Nature Center

Plants we LOVE to Grow in the Yard!

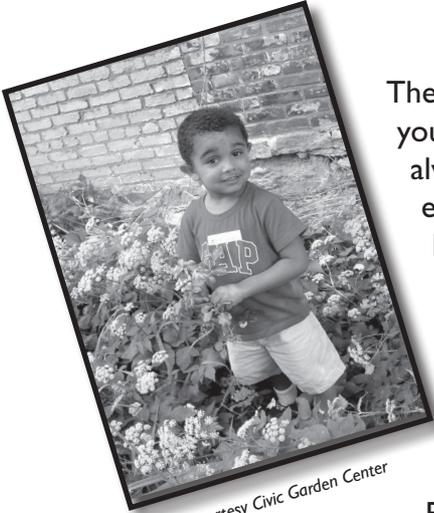


Photo courtesy Civic Garden Center

There are many plants you can use in your garden. Children and gardens are always growing and changing, so enjoy experimenting with a variety of plants. Here are some suggestions that you may want to try.

Tough plants that can take a beating: feather reed grass, lamb's ear, woody thyme, willow, arborvitae.

Plants with which to create hide-aways: tall grasses such as sedge or wild oats; group hemlock, pine and yew together; weeping trees like mulberry, fig or willow; mulberries, apples, maples and oaks are good climbing trees; vines, including squash, small pumpkins, pole beans and scarlet runner beans, can cover bamboo teepees; sunflowers can grow into a tall fort.

Plants to grow and eat: sugarbaby watermelons, tom thumb lettuce, carrots and radishes (kids usually like root crops), dwarf fruit trees, berries, blue potatoes, peas, mints, basils, lavender and nasturtiums, which have a tasty flower.

Plants to stimulate the imagination and use in play: Snapdragons, fairy bells, sensitive plant, money plant and chinese lantern.

Flowers for bouquets: zinnias, cosmos, daisies, marigolds, sunflowers, roses, and snapdragons.

Plants to keep your child breathing deeply: various scented geraniums, roses, lavender, mints, basils, rosemary and lemon balm.

Plants to attract garden creatures: evening primrose for moths; joe pye weed, purple coneflower, sedum and columbine for butterflies; bee balm, obedient plant and cosmos for bees; fir, spruce, serviceberry, dogwood, poppy, goldenrod, sunflower and buffalo grass for birds.

Ideas for theme gardens are: dinosaur garden with prehistoric plants such as club mosses, ferns, and horsetails; an alphabet garden planting from “a” (aster) to “z” (zinnia); or a three sisters garden with beans, squash and corn.

Plants to Avoid!

Many common plants have poisonous parts. Depending on your child’s age, it may be enough to tell them not to eat any part of any plant without your permission. However, here is a list of some poisonous plants.

Remember, “When in doubt - check it out” at:

<http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/plants/> or other searchable poisonous plant websites.

Autumn Crocus	Mayapple
Black Locust	Narcissus
Bleeding Heart	Nightshade
Caster Beans (fatal)	Philodendron
Daffodil	Poison Hemlock
Elderberry	Privet
Elephant Ear	Rhododendron
Foxglove	Rhubarb
Hyacinth	Wisteria
Hydrangea	Yew
Iris	
Jack-in-the-Pulpit	
Jimson Weed	
Larkspur	
Lily-of-the-Valley	



RESOURCES



Cornell University Poisonous Plants Database
<http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/plants/>



Dannenmaier, Molly. *A Child’s Garden: Enchanting Outdoor Spaces for Children and Parents.* New York: Simon & Schuster Editions, 1998.



Rushing, Felder. *New Junior Garden Book.* Iowa: Meredith Corporation, 1999.



Beyond the Backyard... where to go outside!



The Greater Cincinnati area is rich with public parks and nature centers where families can walk, run and play in nature.

The listing in this section provides addresses for over 100 parks and preserves with green lawns, play grounds, garden paths and wooded trails that are free and open to the public.

*Refer to this alphabetical listing for full details
and then find facilities near you by referencing the zip code section.*

Challenge your boundaries!

What do you consider “yours” and what do you think of as “ours”? We are privileged to have so many shared spaces: public parks, green corridors, waterways, and more. Wouldn’t it be great for children to be familiar with the plants, animals, landmarks and waterways that are all around us? These public areas ensure that everyone will have opportunities to experience nature.

Public Parks & Nature Centers

ANDERSON PARK DISTRICT

8249 Clough Pk.
Cincinnati, OH 45244-2746
513/474-0003

BIG BONE LICK STATE PARK

3380 Beaver Rd.
Union, KY 41091
859/384-3522

BLUE ASH PARKS & RECREATION

4343 Cooper Rd.
Blue Ash, OH 45242-5614
513/745-8553

BOONE COUNTY ARBORETUM

9190 Camp Ernst Rd.
Union, KY 41091
859/384-4999
www.bcarboretum.org

CINCINNATI MUSEUM CENTER*

1301 Western Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45203
513/287-7000
www.cincymuseum.org
**Admission charge for some areas*

Edge of Appalachia

3223 Waggoner Riffle Rd.
West Union, OH 45693
937-544-2880

CINCINNATI NATURE CENTER*

513/831-1711
www.CincyNature.org
**Admission charge*

Rowe Woods

4949 Tealtown Rd.
Milford, OH 45150

Long Branch Farm & Trails

6926 Gaynor Rd.
Goshen, OH 45122

CINCINNATI PARK BOARD

Visitor Center in Krohn
Conservatory
1501 Eden Park Dr.
Cincinnati, OH 45202
513/352-4080
www.cincinnati-oh.gov/parks
(open 7 days per week)

Alms Park

710 Tusculum Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45226

Annwood Park

1900 Madison Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45206

Armleder Park

5057 Wooster Pk.
Cincinnati, OH 45226

Armleder Dog Park

4998 Wooster Pk.
Cincinnati, OH 45226
513-521-7275
*(joint with Hamilton County Park District &
Cincinnati Recreation Commission)*

Ault Park

3600 Observatory Dr.
Cincinnati, OH 45208

Avon Woods Nature Center

4235 Paddock Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45229
513-861-3435



Photo courtesy Civic Garden Center

CINCINNATI PARK BOARD (cont'd)

Bellevue Hill Park

2191 Ohio Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45219

Bettman Nature Preserve & Accessible Paths

4 Beech Ln.
Cincinnati, OH 45208
513/321-6070

Burnet Woods

Main Entrance:
3000 Brookline Dr.
Cincinnati, OH 45220
Trailside Nature Center:
3400 Brookline Dr.
513/751-3679

Caldwell Park

Nature Center & Preserve
430 W. North Bend Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45216
513/761-4313

California Woods

Nature Center & Preserve
5400 Kellogg Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45228
513/231-8678

Daniel Drake Park

Main Entrance:
5800 Red Bank Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45213

Dunore Park

650 Ludlow Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45220

Fairview Park

2219 Ravine St.
Cincinnati, OH 45219

Fernbank Park

7001 River Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45233

Ferry Street Park

2201 Eastern Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Fleischmann Gardens

524 Forest Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45229

French Park

3012 Section Rd. (near Ridge Rd.)
Amberley Village, OH 45237

Glenway Park

3241 Glenway Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45204

Hauck Botanic Gardens

2625 Reading Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45206

Hoffner Park

4101 Hamilton Ave. at Blue Rock Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45223

Hopkins Park

207 Dorchester Ave. at Auburn Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45219

Hyde Park Square

2700 to 2734 Erie Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45208

Inwood Park

2360 Vine St. at Hollister St.
Cincinnati, OH 45219

Jackson Hill Park

2001 Eleanor Pl.
Cincinnati, OH 45219

Jergens Park

4359 Hamilton Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45223

Kennedy Heights Park

6039 Kennedy Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45213

**LaBoiteaux Woods
Nature Center & Preserve**

5400 Lanius Ln.
Cincinnati, OH 45224
513/542-2909

Larz Anderson Park

3035 Golden Ave. at Ononta
Cincinnati, OH 45226

Lytle Park

501 E. Fourth St. at Lawrence
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Madison Park

2501 Madison Rd. at Erie Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45208

Marion Park

3830 Reading Rd. at Marion Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45229

Martin Luther King, Jr. Park

3740 Reading Rd. at Burton Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45229

McEvoy Park

6425 Daly Rd. at North Bend Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45224

Miles Edwards Park

4401 Fehr Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45238

Mt. Airy Forest

Main entrance:
5083 Colerain Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45223
McFarlan Woods Shelter:
2800 Westwood Northern Blvd.
Cincinnati, OH 45211
Mt. Airy Dog Park:
2970 Westwood Northern Blvd.
Cincinnati, OH 45211
Everybody's Treehouse:
Trail Ridge Rd. at Oak Ridge Rd.

Mt. Echo Park

Pavilion:
251 Mt. Echo Park Dr.
Cincinnati, OH 45205
Shelter:
202 Crestline Dr.
Cincinnati, OH 45205

Mt. Storm Park

660 Lafayette Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45220

Owl's Nest Park

1984 Madison Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45206

Piatt Park

1 Garfield Pl. at Vine St.
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Rapid Run Park

4450 Rapid Run Pkwy.
Cincinnati, OH 45238

Sayler Park

6601 Gracely Dr. at Monitor Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45233

Seasongood Square Park

3801 Reading Rd.
at Fred Shuttlesworth Circle,
Cincinnati, OH 45229

Stanbery Park

2221 Oxford Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45230

Stella Park

923 Lexington Ave. at Magill Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45229

Stuart Park

6899 Gracely Dr. at Laura Ln.
Cincinnati, OH 45233

**Theodore M. Berry
International Friendship Park**

Main Entrance:
1135 Riverside Dr.
(formerly Eastern Ave.)
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Valley Park

3250 Colerain Ave. at Bates Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45225

Washington Park

1230 Elm St. at Race St.
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Wilson Commons

2951 Bodley Ave. at Wilsonia,
Cincinnati, OH 45205

Wulsin Triangle

2401 Madison Rd. at Observatory Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45208

**CINCINNATI RECREATION
COMMISSION**

805 Central Avenue Suite 800
Cincinnati, OH 45202
513/352-4006
www.cincinnati-oh.gov/recreation

CRC currently has 31 recreation centers, 41 swimming pools, over 2,500 acres of outdoor athletic and playground facilities, tennis attractions, seven premiere golf courses, athletic leagues, seniors' programs, therapeutic programs, before-and-after school programs, summer day camps, and special public events on the waterfront and citywide.

Facilities which include nature trails and/or public access to the Ohio River Water Trail are:

Dunham Recreation Complex

4356 Dunham Ln.
Cincinnati, Ohio 45238

**Yeatman's Cove &
Bicentennial Commons**

705 E. Pete Rose Way
Cincinnati, OH 45202

**CINCINNATI ZOO &
BOTANICAL GARDEN
EDUCATION CENTER***

3400 Vine St.
Cincinnati, OH 45220
513/559-7767
www.cincinnati-zoo.org

*Admission charge

CIVIC GARDEN CENTER OF GREATER CINCINNATI

2715 Reading Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45206
513/221-0981

www.CivicGardenCenter.org

Neighborhood Gardens:

*Please see website for location
of 40 gardens to visit/join,
or check the next section to find
a garden in a zipcode near you.*

CLERMONT COUNTY PARKS

www.ClermontCounty.org/parks

Chilo Lock #34 Park

521 County Park Rd.
Chilo, OH 45112
513/876-9013

Pattison Park

2228 U.S. Rt. 50
Batavia, OH 45103
513/732-2977

COVINGTON PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

638 Madison Ave.
Covington, KY 41011
859/292-2151

DELHI TOWNSHIP PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

697 Neeb Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45233
513/451-3300

Story Woods Park

694 Pontius Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45233

EAST FORK LAKE STATE PARK

Harsha Lake Visitor Center,
US Army Corps Of Engineers
2185 Slade Rd.
Batavia, OH 45103
513/797-6081
www.lrl.usace.army.mil/whl

EAST LOVELAND NATURE PRESERVE

c/o City of Loveland
120 West Loveland Ave.
Loveland, OH 45140

FLORENCE CITY PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

8100 Ewing Blvd.
Florence, KY 41042-7588
859/647-5439

GORMAN HERITAGE FARM

10052 Reading Rd.
Evendale, OH 45241
513/563-6663
www.GormanHeritageFarm.org



Photo courtesy Civic Garden Center

**HAMILTON COUNTY
PARK DISTRICT**

10245 Winton Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45231
513/521-7275
www.GreatParks.org

Armleder Park

*(joint with Cincinnati Parks and
Cincinnati Recreation Commission)*
5057 Wooster Pk.
Cincinnati, OH 45226

Embshoff Woods

4050 Paul Rd.
Delhi Twp., OH 45238

**Farbach-Werner
Nature Preserve**

3455 Poole Rd.
Colerain Twp., OH 45251

Fernbank Park

7100 River Rd./US 50
Cincinnati, OH 45233

Francis RecreAcres

11982 Conrey Rd.,
Sharonville, OH 45249

Glenwood Gardens

10623 Springfield Pk.
Woodlawn, OH 45215
513/771-4055

Lake Isabella

10174 Loveland-Madeira Rd.
Symmes Twp., OH 45140
Boathouse: 513/791-1663

Mitchell Memorial Forest

5401 Zion Rd.
Miami Twp., OH 45002

Miami Whitewater Forest

9001 Mt. Hope Rd.
Harrison, OH 45030
513/367-4774

Sharon Woods

11450 Lebanon Rd.
Sharonville, OH 45241
513/563-4513

Shawnee Lookout

2008 Lawrenceburg Rd.
Miami Twp., OH 45052
Pro Shop: 513/941-0120

Winton Woods/Park's Farm

10245 Winton Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45231
513/521-7275

Woodland Mound

8250 Old Kellogg Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45255
513/474-0580

**KENTON COUNTY
PARKS & RECREATION**

3902 Richardson Rd.
Independence, KY 41051
859/525-7529
www.kentoncounty.org/parks.html

Doe Run Lake

1501 Bullock Pen Rd.
Covington, KY 41011

**LITTLE MIAMI SCENIC RIVER
& TRAIL CENTER**

211 Railroad Ave.
Loveland, OH 45140
513/893-4453

**NEWPORT PARKS
& RECREATION**

998 Monmouth St.
Newport, KY 41071
859/292-6386

**NORWOOD RECREATION
COMMISSION**

2605 Harris Ave.
Norwood, OH 45212-2757
513/531-9798

OXBOW INC.

Lawrenceburg, IN
513/851-9835
www.oxbowinc.info

**SAINT BERNARD PARKS
& RECREATION**

110 Washington Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45217
513/641-3137

SHARONVILLE REC & PARKS

10990 Thornview Dr.
Sharonville, OH 45214-2795
513/563-2895

SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP REC

9150 Winton Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45231-3830
513/522-1410

TRAMMEL FOSSIL PARK

City of Sharonville
Tramway Drive
Sharonville, OH 45241
513/563-1141
www.ci.sharonville.oh.us/Trammel/
direct.htm

**WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP
PARK**

2238 State Route 756
Moscow, OH 45153
513/553-2072

WOODLAWN RECREATION

10141 Woodlawn Blvd.
Woodlawn, OH 45215-1324
513/771-5745

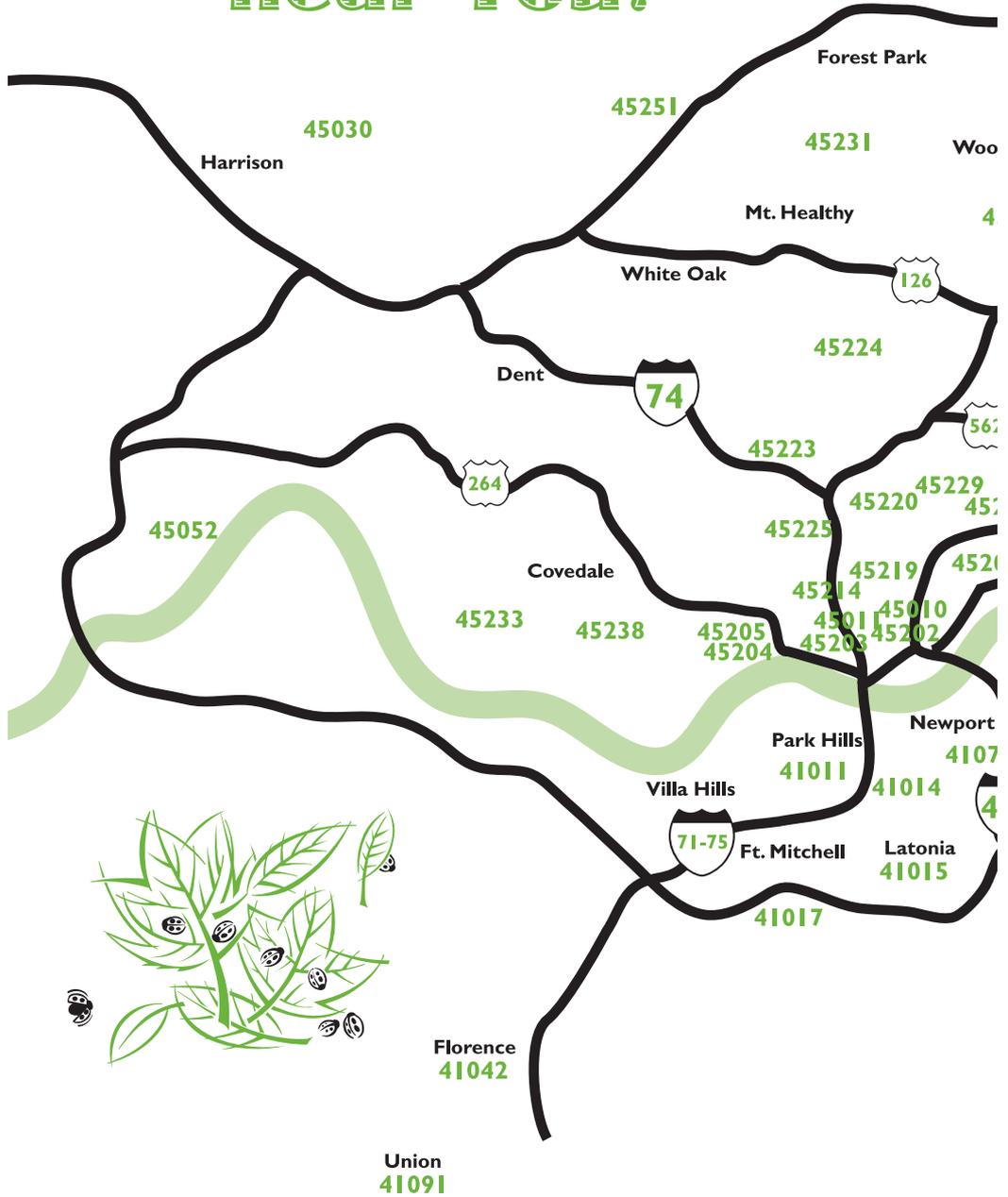
WYOMING RECREATION

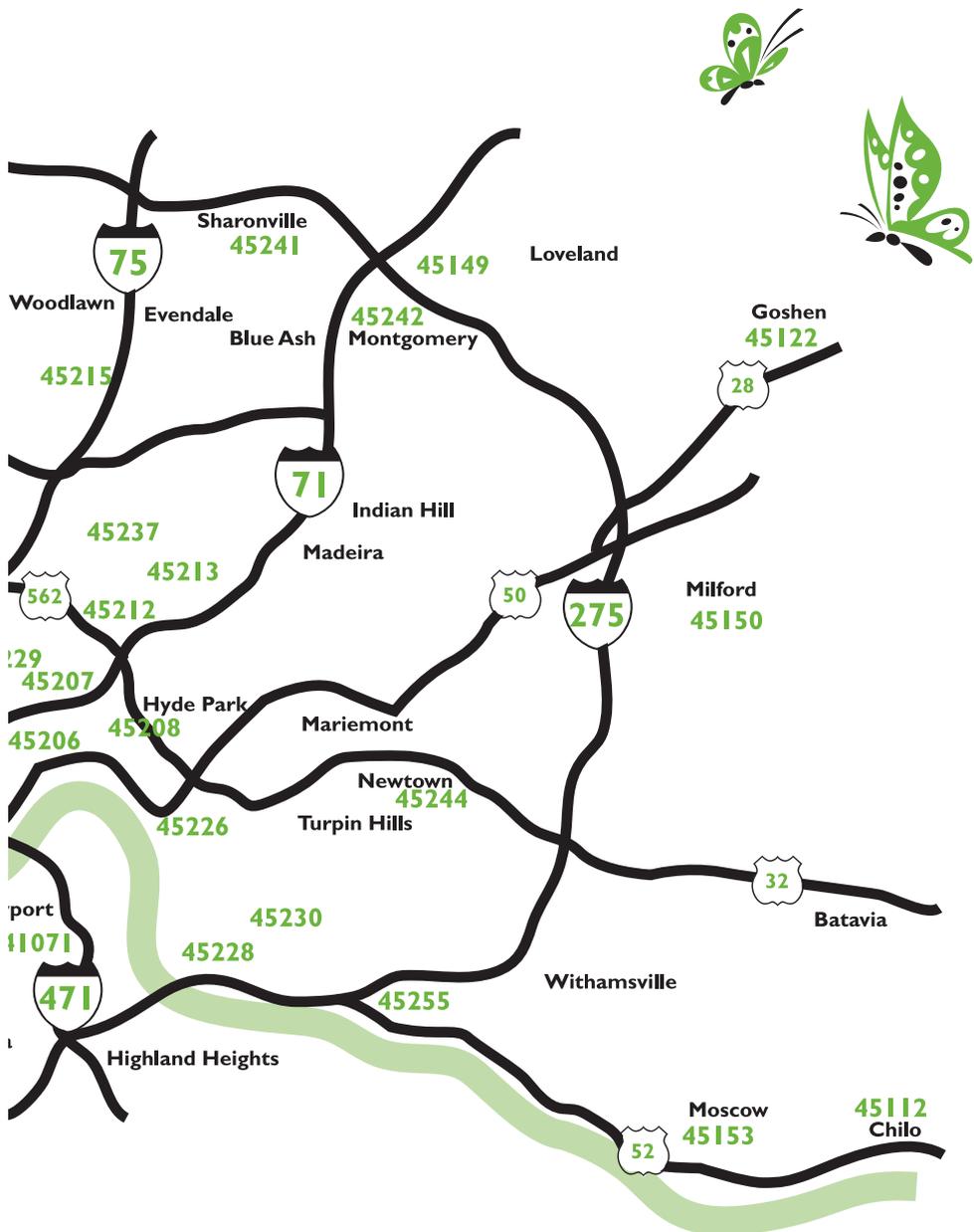
800 Oak Ave.
Wyoming, OH 45215
513/821-5423



Photo courtesy Civic Garden Center

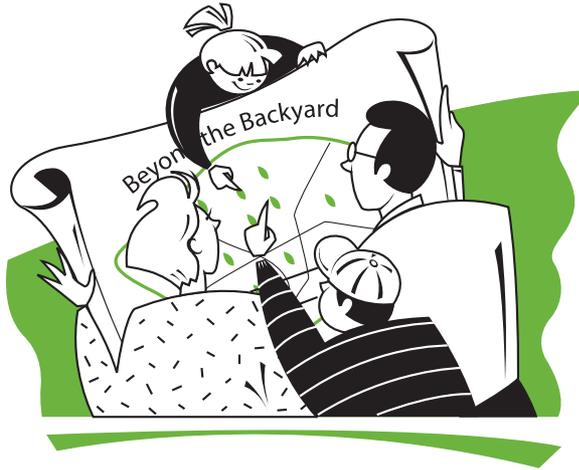
There's a Park near You!





ZIP to your Nearest Park!

Public Parks & Nature Preserves Listed by ZIP Code.



41011

Covington Parks and Recreation

Kenton County Parks and Recreation
Doe Run Lake

Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati
Community Gardens
1116 Greenup St.
1032-43 Lee St.

41014

Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati
Beautification Garden
15th St. & Maryland Ave.

41015

Kenton County Parks & Recreation
Locust Pike Park
Middleton Mills Park

41017

Kenton County Parks & Recreation
Pioneer Park

41042

Florence City Parks and Recreation

41071

Newport Parks and Recreation

Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati
Community Garden
Ann St.

41091

Big Bone Lick State Park
Boone County Arboretum

45002

Hamilton County Park District
Mitchell Memorial Forest

45011

Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati
Community Garden
Sycamore St. (between 720 and 730)

45030

Hamilton County Park District
Miami Whitewater Forest

45052

Hamilton County Park District
Shawnee Lookout

45103

Clermont County Parks: Pattison Park
East Fork State Park

45112

Clermont County Parks
Chilo Lock #34 Park

45122

Cincinnati Nature Center
Long Branch Farm & Trails

45140

East Loveland Nature Preserve
Hamilton County Park District
Lake Isabella
Little Miami Scenic River and Trail Center

45150

Cincinnati Nature Center: Rowe Woods*
**Admission charge*

45153

Washington Township Park

45202

Cincinnati Park Board
Krohn Conservatory
Ferry Street Park
Lytle Park
Piatt Park
Theodore M. Berry
International Friendship Park
Washington Park
Cincinnati Recreation Commission
Yeatman's Cove & Bicentennial Commons

45203

Cincinnati Museum Center*
**Admission Charge for some areas*

45204

Cincinnati Park Board: Glenway Park
Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati
Community Garden
2115 West Eighth St.
Oyler School (2121 Hatmaker)

45205

Cincinnati Park Board
Mt. Echo Park
Wilson Commons
Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati
Community Garden
700 Enright Ave.

45206

Cincinnati Park Board
Annwood Park
Hauck Botanic Gardens
Owl's Nest Park
Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati
Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati
Beautification Gardens
Seminary Pl. and Yale
2520 Park Ave.
Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati
Community Garden
2627 Stanton Ave.
Purcell-Marion, Woodburn Ave.
809 Beecher

45207

Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati
Community Garden
1733 Holloway Ave.
Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati
Beautification Garden
3204 Woodburn Ave.

45208

Cincinnati Park Board
Ault Park
Bettman Nature Preserve and
Accessible Paths
Hyde Park Square
Madison Park
Wulsin Triangle

45210

Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati
Community Garden
1720 Main St.
555 Channing St.
1412-1418 Pleasant St.
1409-1411 Race St.
406-410 East 13th St.

45211

Cincinnati Park Board
Mt. Airy Forest (McFarlan Woods Shelter
and Dog Park Entrance)

45212

Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati
Beautification Garden
Ida Street Garden

Norwood Recreation Commission

45213

Cincinnati Park Board
Daniel Drake Park
Kennedy Heights Park

45214

Cincinnati Park Board: Laurel Park
Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati
Community Garden
Poplar & Freeman
2444-46 W. McMicken

45215

Hamilton County Park District
Glenwood Gardens

Woodlawn Recreation

Wyoming Recreation

45216

Cincinnati Park Board
Caldwell Park Nature Center and Preserve

Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati
Community Garden
125 W. North Bend

45217

Saint Bernard Parks and Recreation

45219

Cincinnati Park Board
Bellevue Hill Park
Fairview Park
Hopkins Park
Inwood Park
Jackson Hill Park

Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati
Community Garden
236 Albion Pl.

45220

Cincinnati Park Board
Burnet Woods
Dunore Park
Mt. Storm Park

Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Gardens*
*Admission Charge

Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati
Community Garden
3737 Clifton Ave.
3522 Beldare Ave.

45223

Cincinnati Park Board
Hoffner Park
Jergens Park
Mt. Airy Forest (*Main Entrance*)

Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati
Community Gardens
1413 Knowlton St.
1655 Chase St.
4113 Witler St.

45224

Cincinnati Park Board
LaBoiteaux Woods Nature Center
and Preserve
McEvoy Park

45225

Cincinnati Park Board
Valley Park

Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati
Community Garden
1882 Baltimore Ave.

45226

Cincinnati Park Board
Alms Park
Armleder Park
Larz Anderson Park

45228

Cincinnati Park Board
California Woods Nature Center
& Preserve

45229

Cincinnati Park Board
Avon Woods Nature Center
Fleischmann Gardens
Marion Park
Martin Luther King, Jr. Park
Seasongood Square Park
Stella Park

45230

Cincinnati Park Board: Stanberry Park

45231

Hamilton County Park District
Winton Woods/Parly's Farm
Springfield Township Recreation

45233

Cincinnati Park Board
Fernbank Park
Sayler Park
Stuart Park

Delhi Township Parks and Recreation
Story Woods Park

Hamilton County Park District
Fernbank Park

45237

Cincinnati Park Board
French Park

45238

Cincinnati Park Board
Miles Edwards Park
Rapid Run Park

Cincinnati Recreation Commission
Dunham Recreation Complex

Hamilton County Park District
Embshoff Woods

45241

Gorman Heritage Farm
Hamilton County Park District
Sharon Woods
Sharonville Recreation and Parks
Trammel Fossil Park

45242

Blue Ash Parks & Recreation

45244

Anderson Park District

45249

Hamilton County Park District
Francis ReCreAcres

45251

Hamilton County Park District
Farbach-Werner Nature Preserve

45255

Hamilton County Park District
Woodland Mound

Hop
to it!

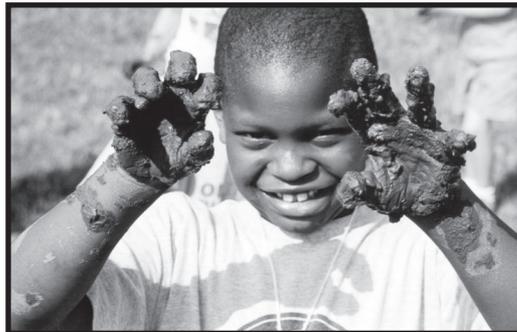


Photo courtesy Cincinnati Nature Center

Safety First!

Often people stay indoors, or keep children indoors, for safety reasons. Fears of poisonous plants and animals sometimes rob folks of the freedom and joy they could experience outdoors. Here is some basic information that can help you avoid potential hazards and put your fears to rest.



Poison Ivy

Poison Ivy: Poison ivy is common along wood edges and clearings. The best protection is to know how to recognize it, then avoid touching it. Poison ivy has three leaflets (parts to a leaf) arranged roughly like a triangle. The vine has coarse “hairs” growing out from both sides of the stem. Be especially careful not to burn any poison ivy vines in a campfire; smoke carries the oil that causes irritation. Three more tips: (1) Stay on the trail while hiking; (2) Keep your dog on a leash so it doesn’t go running through a poison ivy patch and bring the oils back to you; and (3) Wear long slacks while exploring nature, even in the summer.

What to do if you come in contact with poison ivy? If you can find a jewelweed plant, crush the stem and wash the contact area with jewelweed juice. Otherwise, wash the area several times with cool water and a strong soap like Fels-Naptha as soon as you can. You can also buy skin products (Tecnu is a respected brand) that can be used to prevent poison ivy reactions.

Poison oak and poison sumac do not occur in the woods and fields around Cincinnati. That common vine with five leaflets is Virginia Creeper and it does not contain allergenic oil. The red-berried sumacs found here are not poisonous.

Stinging Nettle: This fairly common plant grows in moist soil and can be found near creeks, river bottoms, and low damp areas in the woods. The “sting” comes from fine white “hairs” that are visible on the stem and the underside of the leaves. Once you learn to identify the plant, it is easy to avoid. If you should get stung, it helps to remember that the itch will go away in about twenty minutes.

Stinging Insects: Yes, wasps, hornets and bees will sting in defense of their nests. However, most are not aggressive, and will leave you alone as long as you are at least a few feet away from their nest and not disturbing it in any way. The one exception is the yellowjacket hornet. Typically ground-nesting, these hornets aggressively defend their nest, and become most likely to sting from July through September. When you are hiking or playing outdoors, scan the area for signs of flying insects coming and going from a spot on the ground – then avoid that spot. Again, by staying on the trail as you hike, you dramatically reduce your chances of an unpleasant encounter. If you picnic outside during “yellowjacket season,” check your food before putting it in your mouth – and shake off any stray hornets looking for a handout. Without a nest to defend, they typically won’t sting unless you touch them first.

Venomous Snakes: Relax; there are no venomous snakes in Greater Cincinnati. Except for captive pets kept in aquariums by collectors, venomous snakes in this area were wiped out by people over 70 years ago. Small numbers remain in places with sparse human populations, like Adams County, so be careful if you travel to wilder locations. Venomous snakes are typically non-aggressive and prone to hiding. Unless you step on one or put your hand on it while rock-climbing, you are not likely to be bitten. One good general tip: if you are lifting up a rock or log to see what’s hiding under it, always lift so that the opening is away from you, not pointing towards you. Then be sure to put the rock or log back gently in the same place. Be courteous to insects and wildlife you find there.

A friend might tell you they saw a Cottonmouth in a local river. What they really saw was most likely a Northern Water Snake. While sometimes aggressive, these snakes are not poisonous. The venomous cottonmouth occurs from southern Illinois southward.

Just in case you're wondering what it is like to be bitten by a nonvenomous snake: startling and scary of course, but most like being snagged by a rose bush. If you are bitten, cleanse the wound thoroughly. If you have any concerns, seek medical attention.

Sick Wild Animals: Rabies has not been found in Greater Cincinnati's wildlife for some time. However, distemper does occur sometimes, especially in raccoons and fox. Teach children that healthy wild animals are afraid of people. "Friendly" or "sleepy" animals out during the day or that do not run away from people, are sick and should not be approached. If they are too sick to run away, they are also too sick to attack people. If you see such an animal in the neighborhood, call the SPCA or county animal control so it can be picked up.

Don't worry about catching Bird Flu from birds – all instances are in Asia, in people who literally live with their chickens. You might possibly see birds sick with conjunctivitis (an eye disease) or West Nile virus. These diseases do not normally spread to humans, but it's still best to not pick up or handle sick or dead birds. To avoid the chance of West Nile Disease, wear mosquito repellent when you are out in wet areas or at dusk in summer. If you go tramping through fields in warm weather, check for ticks when you get home, just in case. These are more likely to be found in rural areas; very rarely is one found in a city park.

Big Scary Animals: Healthy wild animals – fox, deer, raccoons, opossums, woodchucks, etc. – run away from humans. Some animals have become used to us, but they still do not attack – they are just slower to move away. Skunks typically do not spray unless seriously provoked. Lions, tigers & bears – oh my? They do not occur in Greater Cincinnati.

Coyotes have moved east, and are now in many of our parks. However, they do not attack people. They eat mice, mostly. Don't permit your tiny toy dog to run loose in natural areas, or leave a small infant alone on the ground for a long time and you'll have nothing to worry about.

Germs: Dirt is really not that dirty. Germs travel from person to person, and very few things in nature are able to transmit diseases to people. Touching rocks, logs (even rotting ones), leaves, moss, a shed snake skin or discarded feather will not give you "germs," and is safer than touching a store or school door-handle. Things you should not touch bare-handed: mushrooms you can't identify and human litter. Also, if you are exploring a creek, it's best to use a hand wipe or hand sanitizer afterward. Very few creeks are completely pollution-free.

So, there you have it - a run-down of the most common fears and perils associated with the natural world..not that bad! No doubt there are more dangerous things under your neighbor's kitchen sink! With just a little knowledge and common sense, you can explore the outdoors with confidence. Hope to see you out in the woods and the fields!

Enjoy!

Tips

A few Guidelines for Parents & Mentors

Children need unstructured time outdoors. Allow children to explore, discover and use nature in their own way, on their own terms. Let nature be their world, not a world where grown-ups make all the rules!



If you live in a house, create a child-friendly backyard.

Give children a place on the porch, deck or in the bedroom where they can display nature treasures that they find and want to keep.

Provide simple tools to aid discovery – kids love tools! Include a bug box, trowel, magnifier, etc.

When you take children to parks and other natural areas, allow them to explore. Let them decide which trails to take. Stay nearby for safety, but don't interfere or help unless asked.

Encourage plenty of time outside. Consider taking a walk to the library, store or post office instead of driving.



If a child asks or remarks about a landmark or natural feature you drive past often, find out more about it and go for a visit.

Take advantage of our natural resources, like the Ohio River and its tributaries! Take children canoeing, kayaking or fishing.



Take a few leaves from different trees while the children are not looking. Give them the leaves and ask them to find which trees they came from. Provide a tree identification book to help kids learn about the trees in their own neighborhood.



In the fall, leave the fallen leaves down for awhile so kids can run around and shuffle through them. Rake up a big leaf pile and let them demolish it. If they're not pre-schoolers, leave the rake out so they can rebuild it if they want.



If you have an appropriate area, let older children build a campfire in the backyard. Set safety rules, then stay away while they and their friends discuss "hot" topics. Check for safety by looking out the window or wandering out to ask if they need more snacks.



Put out bird feeders that can be seen easily from windows. Let children help feed the birds. Keep a bird book by the window to help them identify what they see.



Make up challenges for children to do outside, similar to the Survivor television show. This is a guaranteed kid pleaser, especially if there is a reward (a "gift" of time with Mom or Dad, or perhaps a night off from helping with the dishes).



Outdoor Fun Ideas for Kids!

*These activities are separated
by season, but just because an activity*

is listed in one season, doesn't mean you can't do it any time.

There are enough ideas to have fun trying a new one every week for over a year!



Seasons Search: Go out and find 10 things that you will only see during the spring.

Go to a stream during a spring rain and listen for calling critters.

How many different animals do you hear? Can you identify any?

Plant bulbs, seeds or trees.

Take part in a maple syrup activity and learn about where maple syrup comes from and how it is processed.

Take one shovel full of soil from your garden and examine it. How many worms do you find?

What other insects do you see? Why are they important?

Plant a moonflower. They wake up when you are getting ready to go to bed!

Use a camera to photograph the same area of your yard at the same time each day to see what comes up and what changes. Make a flip book with the photographs so you can watch a flower bloom, or a plant come up through the ground. This could also be done in the fall to see the changing leaves.

Build It! Build a toad abode, bat house or birdhouse and place it outside. Check on it daily and keep a journal about what you see. You can illustrate your journal.



Seasons Search: Go out and find 10 things that you will only see during the summer.

Make compost or talk about how worms "make" soil.

On a hot summer day, play outside in the rain in your bathing suit!

If the grass is slippery, slide on it. If there's a muddy spot, play in the mud!

Pick dandelions, clover or Queen Anne's Lace bouquets. You can display them in a vase. (Local park staff can let you know which invasive alien plants can be picked from your back yard or vacant neighborhood lots or roadsides without harm to the environment.) Shake and blow dandelion seed heads.

Go for a creek walk in old gym shoes or boots. It's like one continuous puddle!

Go outside on a windy day with bubble blowers, paper airplanes, simple kites, etc.

Make some Solar S'mores! Line an old pizza box with some foil and make it into an "oven" to melt your marshmallows and chocolate. Talk about the Sun and alternative/renewable energy sources.

Have a camp out in your back yard. Use a tape recorder to record and identify all the sounds you hear through the night.

Have a star party and plan a picnic under the stars. Spend time on a blanket with some star shaped snacks talking together and "wondering" about the universe.

Find a great grassy area to lie down on and watch the clouds. What do they look like? You can even bring a lunch and a blanket!

Sit in the grass and make a necklace out of clover for someone special. Just tie them together with a knot.



Seasons Search: Go out and find 10 things that you will only see during the fall.

In the fall, pick 3-5 trees to observe in your backyard. Every week, observe changes in size and color of the leaves. How are the trees different? What trees keep their leaves the longest?

Plant bulbs, seeds or trees.



Seasons Search: Go out and find 10 things that you will only see during the winter.

Make a snowman kit (eyes, nose, scarf, etc.) ahead of time so it is ready for the first snow.

Catch snowflakes on a black cloth (coat, sweater, napkin) and inspect them with a magnifier.

Build a fort or an igloo.

Go sled riding.

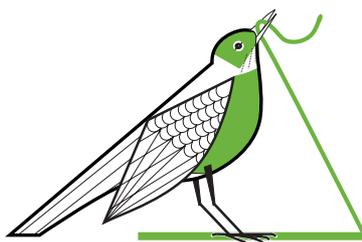
Build a ski jump or snow ramp.

Throw snowballs!

Be the first to make footprints in newly fallen snow.

Make a snow angel. Stay there for a few minutes to listen to the quiet that comes during and after a snowfall. Look at the sky. Does it seem more blue? More clear?

Look for cardinals in the trees. The red males stand out, but can you find the lighter females?



FUN FOR ALL SEASONS

Anybody Home? Go visit your neighbors! Spend some time looking for your neighbors that live under rocks, under leaves, under anything. Remember to be a polite visitor! Put things back the way you found them.

Move slowly and gently, taking care not to disturb any critters you find at home.

Create a nature bingo sheet with various plants, animals, and natural items to find during a hike.

Make a bird feeder by putting shortening or peanut butter and seeds on a pine cone.

Leave out bits of yarn for birds to make their nests.

What kind of birds do you see outside? What kind of food are they eating?

Are their beaks adapted differently depending upon their food?

Adopt a tree! Choose a tree to monitor for the year. Check on it once a month. What do the leaves look like? What about the bark? Are there signs of wildlife? Are there plants that live near or on it?

Toss your hula hoop on a spot outside. Count the plants and animals that are found within the hoop.

Can you identify them? Toss the hoop again in a different location and compare the findings.

With a friend, take turns being blindfolded. Whoever isn't blindfolded can bring different things from nature (like grass, leaves, dirt, sticks, seeds, bark or pinecones) to the blindfolded friend to see if they can guess what it is. Tell your friend to use his or her sense of smell, sense of touch or sense of hearing to identify the object.

Take art supplies outside with you (crayons and paper for younger children; markers, pencils or clay for older children). Choose one natural thing (tree, rock, plant, etc.) to draw. Draw it from a creative perspective (standing above it, lying underneath it, sitting very close to it, etc.).

Pretend to be an ant and draw it from the ant's point of view!

Creative Writing: Take a walk outside. Choose a plant or animal that you see. Pretend you are that animal and write a letter to someone. If you have a friend with you, write to each other!

Take a hike bringing along sheets of paper (thick paper of natural fibers works best -- you could even make your own!). As you go, collect natural materials that appeal to you...berries, leaves, twigs, galls, soil, mud, bark, etc. Find a quiet place along the trail and create a work of art using these materials. Rub them on the paper to see if they leave a mark. Have fun and experiment! Draw with these natural materials. Be sure to leave your artwork in the sun for a little while to let it dry if you've used moist material.

Take a family walk and practice coming up with rhyming words for the things that you see. Can your family come up with a poem about your walk? If you get really good at it, move around to other locations and try different types of poems (e.g. simple rhymes, limericks, humorous, factual). Illustrate your poems!

Take crayons and paper outside and make leaf or bark rubbings.

Then, bring nature inside by displaying these pieces of art in the house.

Sit in an outdoor place with a journal and close your eyes. Listen, smell, and feel the world around you. Write down a description of that place based on what you experienced/sensed. Did you notice things that you would have missed if you had been just looking with your eyes?

Turn over rocks in a stream and look for critters that are hiding underneath. Can you identify any?

Dig in the dirt!

Make a journal on a rainy day, then take it outside to compare your observations when the weather is nicer.

Play with your toys (dolls, trucks, etc.) outside!

Have a scavenger hunt.

Take a family hike with a theme: find shapes, colors and textures, or look for objects starting with each letter of the alphabet.

Take notice of nature when you are doing other things. For example, while you are walking the dog, identify leaves and birds that you see along the way.

Play "Olympic Announcer". Describe what your friends are doing in a very positive way as a sports announcer: "She climbs the ladder to the slide, her foot slips but she recovers, she's getting to the top," etc.

Go rock-hunting. Can the rocks you see be found on other planets? Get the rocks wet. Can you spot any fossils?

Install a rain gauge to keep track of how much rain falls during a storm.

Ride your bike or go rollerblading.

Throw a ball to your dog in the backyard or go to a dog park.

Launch a model rocket. It is important to pick a large open space for this activity. When choosing your spot, think about animal habitats. The habitat for a squirrel is not going to make as good of a launch site as the habitat for a gopher. What weather conditions do you have to think about?

Play with trucks in a mud puddle.

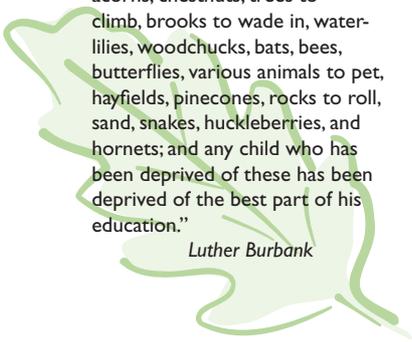
Create a Constellation: Talk about some of the familiar constellations and then try to find a group of stars that looks like something to you. Try to get a friend to see the same "picture." Give your constellation a name and make up a legend as to how that constellation got into the sky. (For example, the "elephant constellation": An elephant was drinking water and got the hiccups. It hiccupped so hard that he was flung into the sky and now lives among the stars.)

Make a pair of binoculars out of toilet paper tubes!

Collect as many seeds as you can find. Mount and label them, if possible.

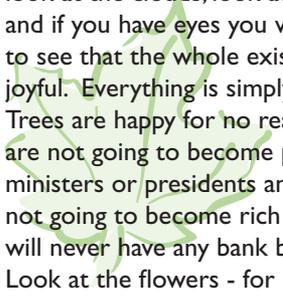
Go out and take a survey or sample of as many different colors in nature as possible.





“Every child should have mud pies, grasshoppers, water-bugs, tadpoles, frogs and mud-turtles, elderberries, wild strawberries, acorns, chestnuts, trees to climb, brooks to wade in, water-lilies, woodchucks, bats, bees, butterflies, various animals to pet, hayfields, pinecones, rocks to roll, sand, snakes, huckleberries, and hornets; and any child who has been deprived of these has been deprived of the best part of his education.”

Luther Burbank



“Look at the trees, look at the birds, look at the clouds, look at the stars... and if you have eyes you will be able to see that the whole existence is joyful. Everything is simply happy. Trees are happy for no reason; they are not going to become prime ministers or presidents and they are not going to become rich and they will never have any bank balance. Look at the flowers - for no reason. It is simply unbelievable how happy flowers are.”

Osho



“Every year my family will pick all the vegetables from the garden. We use the bad ones to throw at our parents and we get points for where we hit them.”

5 year old garden club member



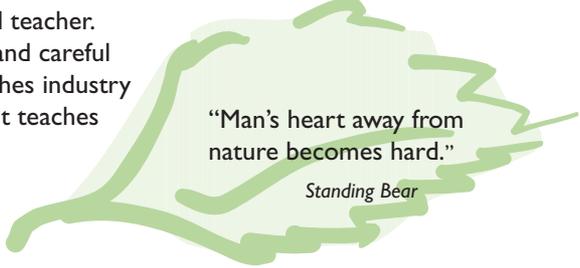
“Nature helps us eat and flowers help keep our houses pretty.”

7 year old garden club member



“A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all it teaches entire trust.”

Gertrude Jekyll



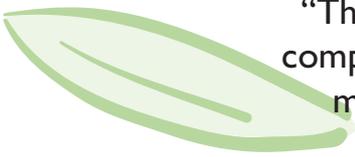
“Man’s heart away from nature becomes hard.”

Standing Bear



“One day I’ll have a green thumb”

9 year old community gardener



“Forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the winds long to play with your hair.”

Kahlil Gibran

“The joy of looking and comprehending is nature’s most beautiful gift.”

Albert Einstein

“If you think (the lavender) is pretty, let me show you the roses.”

5 year old community gardener



The Grow Outside Guide to Outdoor Play is brought to you by

Leave No Child Inside Greater Cincinnati

Leave No Child Inside of Greater Cincinnati is a collaboration of organizations and individuals educating the community that time spent in nature is essential for the physical, mental and emotional health of all children.

As of the date of this printing, the collaborative consisted of the following:



Cincinnati Horticultural Society
Cincinnati Museum Center
Cincinnati Nature Center
Cincinnati Observatory Center
Cincinnati Park Board
Cincinnati Recreation Commission
Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden
Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati
Environmental Education Council of Ohio
Granny's Garden School
Greater Cincinnati Environmental Educators
Green Umbrella
Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services,
Solid Waste Management District
Hamilton County Park District
Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District
Imago
Keep Cincinnati Beautiful
Mill Creek Restoration Project
Oxbow, Inc.

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