

BACKYARD NATURE STUDIES

Nature Journal Prompts:

Do these in whatever order makes sense to you! Add your own ideas to the list too. *Please check for ticks after going indoors!* Parents, please help read these prompts and encourage spending time outdoors everyday to journal, sit spot, play, and explore.

Choose a Sit Spot to visit everyday: A sit spot (or secret spot) is simply a favorite place in nature (in your backyard)that you visit regularly to cultivate awareness as you expand your senses and study patterns of local plants, birds, trees, animals, etc. (naturementor.com) Coyotes Guide says: *“find one place in your natural world that you visit all the time and get to know as your best friend. Let this be a place that you learn to sit still - alone, often, and quietly - before you playfully explore beyond. This will become your place of intimate connection with nature”*

Bonus: Before going to your sit spot or working in your nature journal, run around your yard three times, do 20 jumping jacks and 10 pushups. Take three deep breaths in and out. This will help you concentrate!

PROMPTS:

1. Put your paper up against a tree trunk and do a bark rubbing. Compare several different trees. Identify them if you can.
2. Find a green leaf (like clover or plantain) or blade of grass, identify it if you can and sketch it. Then, rub it into your page to color your page green.
3. Take a look at buds on plants in your yard. Sketch several and compare different shapes and sizes and colors.
4. Go on an insect hunt and sketch what you find. Try to find at least three different insects.
5. Make a square out of sticks on the ground and explore this patch to see what you find. Record in your journal all the details of what you see i.e. leaves, insects, rocks, grass, etc.
6. Sit still and listen for birds. See how many you can hear/see. Sketch at least one bird in your journal that you see.
7. Close your eyes and listen. Count on your fingers five different sounds that you hear. Record them in your journal and sketch one.
8. Find four different types of moss or lichen on logs, tree trunks, rocks, buildings and sketch. Identify if you can.
9. Dig a small hole and draw/record what you find. Rub a smear of dirt in your journal to show you really dug a hole!
10. Make a fairy house and then draw it in your journal.
11. Find a special rock or pine cone, draw it, and then keep it in your pocket for good luck.
12. Find something that smells good - a leaf, a needle, a twig and sketch it.

13. Find new green shoots/growth and sketch them.
14. Bring in a twig with buds and try to force-bloom it. Sketch it in different stages of blossoming.
15. Try to sit still enough outside in your sit spot that a bird or chipmunk comes close to you on a branch. Sketch it.
16. Check the wind - which way are the trees blowing? Sketch the tree tops blowing in the wind. Ask an adult to help you identify North, South, East, and West. Determine direction wind is blowing.
17. If you have a thermometer at home, record the temperature outdoors everyday and the weather - is it sunny, cloudy, rainy? How is it changing over the week?
18. Count all of the trees in your yard. Are they mostly evergreen or mostly deciduous? Who is living in the trees in your yard. Find holes, nests, or other homes of insects, birds and animals in your trees and sketch them. Also, watch them to see if they change.
19. If you find something interesting outside, sketch and write about!
20. Write three of your own prompts below:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

HAVE FUN!

