



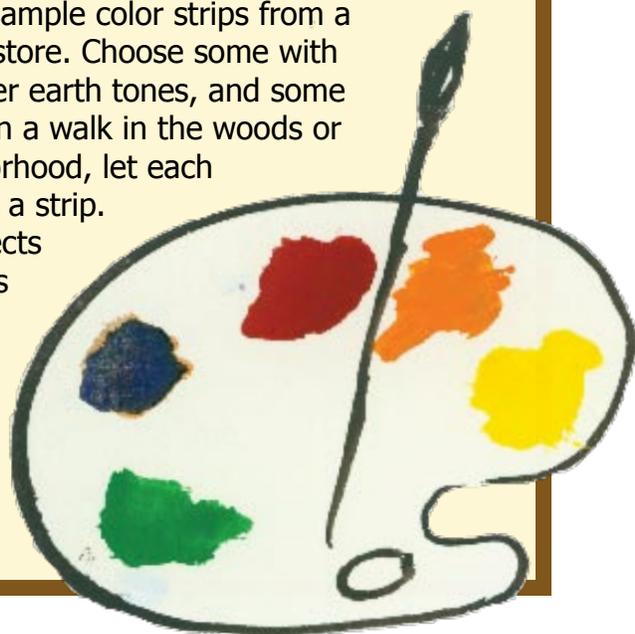
Enjoy

Nature Near You In Summer

Getting your family in touch with **NATURE** is as simple as walking outside. Have fun and learn together outdoors with these simple activities you can do in your backyard... and beyond!

COLOR WALK

Pick up a few paint sample color strips from a home improvement store. Choose some with green, brown or other earth tones, and some with bright colors. On a walk in the woods or around your neighborhood, let each family member carry a strip. Look for natural objects that match the colors on the strips. Which colors are easiest to find? Would that change with seasons?



BUTTERFLY FEEDER

Butterflies eat nectar from flowers. If you don't have many flowers near your house, you can fake it! You will need a small jar, such as a baby food jar, and a piece of sponge. An adult should use a large nail or $\frac{1}{4}$ inch drill bit to make a hole in the jar's lid. Cut a 2-inch strip from a clean sponge and push it through the hole. It should fit very tightly, with about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch sticking out the top and the rest sticking out the bottom of the lid. Decorate the jar with bright colors to make it look more like a flower. Make butterfly food by mixing 1 part sugar to 9 parts water. Fill the jar with the food; screw the lid on tight, and use string or wire to hang the jar upside down outdoors. This Web site can help you identify the butterflies that visit: <http://www.virginia.edu/blandy/ClarkeCountyLandUseSurvey/butterflyfieldguide2006.pdf>

FAMILY TREE

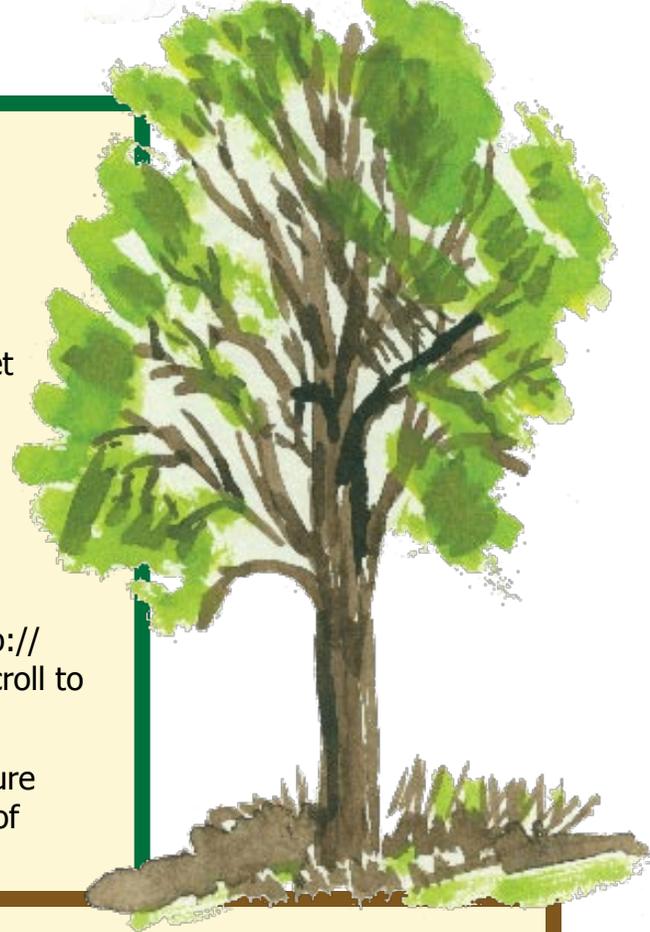
Choose one tree in your yard to be your "family" tree. If you don't have any trees, choose a tree at a park, school, library or other place you visit often. Make a family tree scrapbook to record the things you do and learn as you get to know your tree this year.

 Draw or take a picture of your tree in summer. This is the easiest time of year to find out the name of your tree. This Web site will help you: <http://www.fw.vt.edu/dendro/forsite/key/intro.htm>. You can also buy or download a guide to Virginia's trees here: <http://www.dof.virginia.gov/info/index-forms-docs.shtml> (scroll to Tree Identification).

 Find out how tall your tree is. On a sunny day, measure the length of the tree's shadow. Measure the height of someone in your family, then measure the length of that person's shadow. Convert all measurements to the same unit (such as inches), and use this formula to get the tree's height:

$$\text{Tree Height} = \frac{\text{Tree Shadow} \times \text{Person's Height}}{\text{Person's Shadow}}$$

(Convert the answer to feet or meters.)



QUIET TIME

Try this in your yard, along a trail, at the beach, or anywhere you like to be outside. Everyone should sit in a circle, facing out, and be still and quiet for 5 minutes. Look, listen, sniff, feel the air and the ground. Write down or remember the things you saw, felt, heard and smelled. When 5 minutes are up, turn around so everyone is facing each other. Talk about the things you wrote down or remembered. Did you all notice the same things?

STAYING SAFE

Summer brings insects that can bite or sting. Most of the biters are hoping to make a meal of your blood. They include ticks, chiggers, mosquitoes and deer flies. Keep them off by using a repellent. Check for ticks after you have been outdoors. This Web site will teach you how to remove ticks safely: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/envirohort/426-066/426-066.html>. Unlike the biters, the stingers do not want to come near you. In fact, they only sting if they feel they are in danger. These insects include the bees and wasps that pollinate our plants and feed on many insects we consider pests. It can be fun to observe bees visiting your flowers, or to watch wasps hunting for caterpillars to feed their young. Just keep a safe distance, and don't go near hives or nests. If you are allergic, keep a sting kit with you.



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