

Exploring Nature with Children A Complete, Year-long Curriculum by Lynn Seddon

If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder without any such gift from the fairies, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.

Rachel Carson

For Elianna and Rose, who renewed my joy of exploring nature.

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An important note:

There may be the occasional topic that does not tie in with what you are experiencing locally. This is to be expected, as nature follows a rhythm, not a timetable. In this situation, simply choose a different week as your focus, and return to the current week when appropriate.

The date of the Harvest Moon, for example, changes each year, so it will not always fall neatly into the third week of September, as you will find it in the Exploring Nature Curriculum. The Harvest Moon is the name of the full moon closest to the Autumnal Equinox. In the Northern Hemisphere, the Harvest Moon usually falls in September, but about once every four years it occurs in October, so please do take this into account.

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“Consider, too, what an unequalled mental training the child-naturalist is getting for any study or calling under the sun -the powers of attention, of discrimination, of patient pursuit, growing with his growth, what will they not fit him for?”

Charlotte Mason

January - Week Three

Winter Tree Study

Winter can be a very interesting time to observe trees. Their beautiful silhouettes stretch across the winter skyline, revealing their shapes more clearly in the absence of leaves.

This Week's Nature Walk Activity

This week return with your child to your regular nature spot to study the tree that you adopted back in October.

Look carefully; your tree may appear to be bare, but take a closer look and you should see buds that have formed, containing baby leaves and flowers, just waiting for the right time to grow.

Look how the buds are arranged on the twigs of your tree. The ones along the sides of the twig are called *axillary* or *lateral* buds. The bud at the tip of the branch is called a *terminal* bud. Explore the arrangement of the axillary buds along the twig.

- *Opposite buds are just that; they grow opposite each other from the main twig in pairs.*
- *Alternate buds take turns, growing from the twig one at a time.*
- *Whorled buds grow in sets of three or more, in a circle, or whorl around the twig.*

The places where the buds attach to the twig are called *nodes*. Below the nodes, you may see *leaf scars*. When a leaf drops, a scar is left just under the bud and some trees are easily identified by their leaf scars.

As you investigate, consider the size, shape and colour of the buds. What about their texture? Are they smooth? Furry? Sticky?

Sketch your observations in your nature journals and include any notes that may be helpful, such as those about the texture and size of the twigs or buds.

Handbook of Nature Study:

Trees - pages 618,

Tree study - pages 622-23

Winter tree study - 624-25

Tree types - pages 628 - 692

Book List

Once There Was a Tree by Natalia Romanova
ISBN-13: 978-0140546774

Sky Tree: Seeing Science Through Art by Thomas Locker
ISBN-13: 978-0064437509

A Year Around the Great Oak by Gerda Muller
ISBN-13: 978-1782506027

Our Apple Tree by Gorel Kristina Naslund
ISBN-13: 978-1596431911

The Enchanted Wood by Enid Blyton
(Multiple editions)

Be a Friend to Trees by Patricia Lauber
ISBN-13: 978-0439328630

The Story of Trees by Ferdinand C. Lane
ASIN: B0007DT9K2

The Story Book of Science by Jean Henri Fabre
Available free at archive.org
ISBN-13: 978-1451501230
The Old Pear Tree
The Age of Trees

Trees That Every Child Should Know by Julia Ellen Rogers
Available free at archive.org

Trees and Shrubs by Arabella B. Buckley
ISBN-13: 978-1599152752

Tell Me, Tree. All About Trees for Kids by Gail Gibbons
ASIN: B00MXGDEE8

A Little Guide to Trees by Charlotte Voake
ISBN-13: 978-1903919828

Trees, Leaves, And Bark by Diane Burns
ISBN-13: 978-1559716284

The Mystery & Magic of Trees by Jen Green
ISBN-13: 978-0241355435

Nature Anatomy by Julia Rothman
ISBN-13: 978-1612122311

Botanicum by Kathy Willis
ISBN-13: 978-1783703944

Winter Tree Finder (Eastern US) by May T. Watts
ISBN-13: 978-0912550039

Winter Trees: A Photographic Guide to Common Trees & Shrubs by Dominic Price
ISBN-13: 978-1908819116

The Hidden Life of Trees by Peter Wohlleben
ISBN-13: 978-0008218430

A poem to enjoy this week:

Trees

By Sara Coleridge

The Oak is called the king of trees,
The Aspen quivers in the breeze,
The Poplar grows up straight and tall,
The Peach tree spreads along the wall,
The Sycamore gives pleasant shade,
The Willow droops in watery glade,
The Fir tree useful in timber gives,
The Beech amid the forest lives.

A piece of art to enjoy this week

Winter Morning by Igor Grabar (1871-1960)
Oil on canvas. 1907

Extension activities for your child this week:

- Bring home a few budding twigs from your special tree. Place the freshly cut twigs into a vase of fresh water and wait patiently for your buds to open!

Which buds contain leaves, and which buds the flowers?

Which buds open first, the axillary, or the terminal?

- Nature Weaving

1. Look for a forked branch that has fallen from a tree.
2. Take some string or yarn and tie to the top of one of the forks of the branch.
3. Take the yarn to the other fork, wrap around a couple of times, then take the yarn back to the first fork.
4. Repeat this process until you run out of space.
5. Tie the yarn off tightly and cut off the remainder.
6. Use the yarn to tuck in any nature treasures you may find, such as fallen leaves, seed heads, dried grasses, and other such items.
7. Enjoy your handwork!

- Create a winter tree collage, using just black and white papers and recycled newspapers.

- Carefully dissect some buds from different trees. What do you find inside? Sketch your findings in your nature journal.

Thank you for purchasing Exploring Nature with Children;
I hope that you find it to be helpful in home educating your family.

If you would like to keep in touch, I can be found at the following places:

The Exploring Nature with Children Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/exploringnaturewithchildren/>

The new Raising Little Shoots community Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/294271207955449/>

My website:

<https://raisinglittleshoots.com>

My Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/raisinglittleshoots/>

Thank you again - your purchase is appreciated.

Happy exploring!

Lynn

