

# STARTER PROGRAM – BACKYARD SCAVENGER HUNT

When going somewhere filled with nature isn't an option (like the woods, beach, or somewhere else remote) looking closely for nature in your own backyard is the way to go. This isn't your normal scavenger hunt though. With this starter program you'll be diving deeper into the who, what, when, where and why of the items/creatures on our master list.

**Goal:** To familiarize yourself (or your students) with the local wildlife in your backyard. Looking closely for small traces of wildlife, or nature, help us to understand that we are constantly partaking in nature and that everything we do can affect the natural landscape around us.

**Resources/Materials:**

**Scavenger Hunt Master List**

**Internet/Field Guides (To Research Answers to Questions We Have)**



## THE SCAVENGER HUNT MASTER LIST

Each item on our list is accompanied by questions to ask yourself or others. Answer each question with your best guess or hypothesis before moving on to another item. **(It may help to write down answers to your questions, so you don't forget for later.)**

- **Water** (Where did the water come from? What animals/insects use the water? Are there other parts of nature that need the water?)
- **Soil** (What parts makes up soil? Is the soil packed hard or loose? What do you think plants grow better in, packed or loose soil?)
- **Fallen Leaf** (What colour is the leaf? What colour do you think the leaf was before it fell? Did it fall from a nearby tree? What else do you notice about the leaf [texture, smell, shape, edges, etc.] )
- **Plant Bud** (What direction is the bud growing? Does it reach toward the sun? Do you see evidence of other buds close to this one? What will this bud produce [flower, leaf]?)
- **Fruit/Vegetable Seed** (What size is the seed? What colour is the seed? What fruit/vegetable is the seed from? How would you plant the seed? What is the best way to plant the seed?)
- **Plant Gone to Seed** (How do you think these seeds spread? How far do you think the seeds will get?)
- **Bird Nest** (What is the nest made of? Where is the nest located? Is it safe from predators? How big is the nest?)
- **Food That a Bird Might Eat** (What kind of bird would eat this food? Is it natural bird food? What other kinds of foods do you think birds eat?)
- **Sunny Spot** (What parts of nature use sun? Does this sunny spot get shade during the day as well? What plant growth do you see in the sunny spot?)
- **Shady Spot** (What can shady spots be good for? Can animals use a shady spot during the year? What plant growth do you see in this shady spot?)
- **Insect Burrow** (What kind of insect could have made this burrow? Were you able to easily find it? Is there a network of tunnels that led you to the burrow? What other places would make for a good insect hiding place?)
- **Insect Tracks** (What insect are the tracks from? How far can you see the tracks for? Using the tracks, try to figure out what the insect did.)
- **Animal Tracks** (What animal made the tracks? How old are the tracks? Which way was the animal going? Is it a big animal or small animal? Was the animal moving fast or slow? Are the tracks from a pet or a wild animal?)
- **Bird Chirping** (What kind of song is the bird making? Is there more than one bird? Is the bird close or far away? Do you know what kind of bird is chirping?)
- **Insect/Animal's Natural Home** (What kind of animal lives here? What makes it a good place to live? Was it easy or hard to find?)
- **Insect/Animal's Adopted Home** (What kind of animal lives here? What makes it a good place to live? Was it easy or hard to find? How does this adopted home mimic the animal's natural home?)

**Note to Parents/Mentors:** When answering the questions associated with the scavenger hunt, it's not necessary for the answers to be correct. If you, as the leader, know the answers to the questions, it's also not necessary to correct the answers your students/children have provided. Ask leading questions that might point them in the right direction. **If your child suggests that a bunny rabbit eats macaroons, let them believe that it could be true.** The point of this activity isn't to fill students with information about nature, it is to get your students to take part in nature and experience the wonder it holds.