

EXPLORE OUR URBAN FOREST



Our urban forest includes parks and also the plants on our patios, in our yards, along our streets and on our school grounds too. How many of these bingo activities can you check off? Choose your favourites and make them part of your everyday plans!

NOTICING WALK	SIGNS OF THE SEASONS	GRATITUDE	NATURE JOURNAL	GET GROWING
MICRO HIKE	BACKYARD BIRDS	SENSORY WALK	SHARING IS CARING	OUTDOOR PLAY
NATURE BREAK	MINDFUL MOMENT	FREE	NATURE NUMBERS	WONDER WALK
LIVE BIRD CAMS	CITIZEN SCIENCE	WILDLIFE WATCH	STORY OF PLACE	CULTURAL VALUES
WILD WEDNESDAY	TREE CARE	FAMILY TIME	NATURE ART	PICTURE PERFECT

Backyard Birds: Sit quietly for 5-10 minutes watching birds and their behaviours. Are they gathering nesting materials, collecting worms for their babies, or eating seeds off a tree? Identify at least three new birds in your neighbourhood – an app like Merlin Bird ID can help. A bird's size, colour, song and behaviour will help you narrow it down. If you can't identify it, just name it yourself!

Citizen Science: Small plants in the cracks of sidewalks, in our backyards, and along the sides of park trails often get overlooked. With a little time (and help from a field guide or an app like Seek by iNaturalist), you'll begin to recognize some of the more common plants in our urban forest. Become a citizen scientist - share your observations on the iNaturalist app, a global initiative to observe and record the biodiversity of plants and animals on earth.

Cultural Values: Different cultures can have different values, including when it comes to our relationship with the natural world. Talk with your family about any family traditions you have and how they're connected to nature. Can you create any new family traditions that value the urban forest?

Family Time: Take your family to the forest, the urban forest that is! Whether you watch birds from your patio, look for bugs in your backyard, or take an after-dinner walk around your neighbourhood, family nature time is important and benefits everyone. Invite family members to do other bingo activities with you.

Get Growing: It's a great time to make things more beautiful! Help wildlife by planting seeds in a pot or in your backyard. Care for your growing seeds, checking on them daily. Do some research to make sure you're not planting invasive plants - visit Surrey's "Invasive Plants" web page for more information.

Gratitude: The more time you spend in nature, the more you notice, learn and appreciate all that it has to offer. Practising gratitude for the natural world is something you can do every day. Write three reasons you're grateful for nearby nature in your journal, or simply go outside to thank a tree and give it a compliment.

Live Bird Cams: It can be difficult to get a good look at our local birds, especially birds of prey that are typically flying high above in the sky, camouflaged in trees, or resting unseen in their nests. For an up-close look at some of these incredible predators, including Red-tailed Hawks and Barred Owls, tune into Cornell Lab's live bird cams at allaboutbirds.org/cams

Micro Hike: There's a lot to discover if you take time to take a closer look. Choose a natural area or the bark of a tree trunk about 30 cm², and scan the area cm by cm (with a magnifier if you have one). Look for tiny seeds, fuzzy hairs on the backs of leaves, or (if you're lucky) itty bitty bug eggs.

Mindful Moment: Find a place outdoors where you can regularly visit, and sit quietly for a few minutes. This is your "sit spot." Take a deep breath and clear your mind. What can you hear? What can you smell? What can you see? How are you feeling? Visit often, and bring your nature journal to write or draw.

Nature Art: Making art inspired by nature can help you build your observation skills and learn who your wildlife neighbours are. Create a picture of a bird in your neighbourhood, doing your best to match its colour patterns. Nature mandalas are fun too!

Nature Break: Taking a break outside is a good way to refresh, and can help reduce stress and anxiety, and boost memory, concentration and creativity. Whether it's snack time or a break between some indoor learning time, a quick five-minute break outside will help you to feel happier and healthier.

Nature Journal: Create a nature journal and keep it close when exploring the urban forest. Add drawings and photos of your favourite things to the cover of a notebook. Note wildlife sightings and dates when plants first bloom, draw or colour your favourite tree, and record your wonders.

Nature Numbers: Have you heard of fractals and the Fibonacci sequence? They're specific patterns you can find in nature. Learn more about these on the internet and look for examples in our urban forest.

Noticing Walk: Notice the small things in nature that you might normally pass by. Walk slowly as you imagine exploring the space for the first time. What are some neat things you've never noticed before?

Outdoor Play: You can connect with nature anytime you're outside. If you're hula hooping in your backyard, picnicking on your patio, or riding your bike, nature is all around you! While you're outside, you may spot an eagle circling overhead, a slug crossing your path, or a pollinator flying around your patio.

Picture Perfect: Nature photography can help you to slow down and focus on what's around you. Try taking pictures of things far away and closeups too. Practise in bright light and dim light, and experiment with shadows. No camera? Capture pictures in your memory!

Sensory Walk: Awaken your senses as you explore nearby nature. Take a big breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. Compare the scent of a flower to some crunched up leaves. Use your "owl eyes" to look up, down and all around. What is the farthest thing you can see? What is the closest? Cup your hands behind your ears to make "deer ears" – what can you hear?

Sharing is Caring: It's great to explore and discover things, and even better when you can share it with a friend. Tell a friend about your nature explorations and share at least one thing you learned about the urban forest. Ask if they've gone outside lately, and plan to connect again.

Signs of the Seasons: From bugs and blossoms, to sunshine and singing birds, the urban forest is full of seasonal changes! What clues can you find that mark the different seasons? Record your favourite things about each season in your journal.

Story of Place: Learn the name of the park closest to you. Can you find out how it got its name, or when it became a park? What did it look like in the past? Visit the City's mapping system at surrey.ca/cosmos to find your park and check out aerial photos dating back to 1949. Learn more by exploring Surrey's heritage at surrey.ca/archives.

Tree Care: Help care for Surrey's street trees by adding tree wells to young trees near your property and watering trees throughout the summer. Visit Surrey's "Tree Watering & Care" web page to learn how.

Wildlife Watch: Bees are buzzing, worms are wiggling, and squirrels are chattering. Search trees, gently turn over rocks, and count how many different animals you can find. Create a graph to see what you spotted the most. Be sure to put their homes back how you found them and most importantly, give wildlife lots of space by watching from a distance!

Wild Wednesday: Schedule at least one day per week to connect with nature. Call it "Wild Wednesday," "Forest Friday" or whatever you like. Come up with a plan that works for you and challenge your friends to do the same.

Wonder Walk: As you walk around the urban forest, see how many things you can wonder about? For example, "I wonder what that bird is doing," or "I wonder how old that tree is." You don't need all the answers! Create a story around your wonders.