



GREEN MOUNTAIN Audubon CENTER



Autumn Inquiry



Exploring at the Green Mountain Audubon Center

At the Audubon Center, we encouraged children to explore the changes occurring during autumn using all of their senses. Together the children depending on time, weather, and interests explored different signs of autumn—from seeds and falling leaves to animal caches to migrating birds - at the Audubon Center's fields, forests, and ponds.

Here are some of the things your child did and learned about during their fieldtrip to the Green Mountain Audubon Center...



Insects

Did You Know... that some insects freeze or migrate during the winter, while others, such as crickets, prepare for winter by mating and laying eggs underground? Once the eggs are underground the adult dies and in the spring eggs hatch and new crickets come alive.

Ask Your Child... about using field sweeping nets, magnifying glasses, and insect guidebooks in the field at the Audubon Center. Ask him what s/he found and which insect was his/her favorite?

Forest

Did You Know... wood frogs and spring peepers burrow under the leaf litter and freeze solid until spring, and that milk and garter snakes migrate up hillsides and find a rocky den to overwinter in?

Ask Your Child... What clues did s/he notice that trees are getting ready for winter? What was his/her favorite color that s/he noticed in the woods?

Seeds

Did You Know... a plant's primary means of reproduction is through the production and dispersal of seeds? Nature has designed many ways of scattering seeds, ranging from seeds that hitchhike or seeds that are shaped like helicopters and travel in the wind.

Ask Your Child... about the seed scavenger hunt s/he did and the variety of seed types that s/he collected. Will all the seeds that are dispersed grow into plants?

Beavers

Did You Know... beavers are well-adapted to survive cold Vermont winters? Beavers grow a winter coat of thick fur and cache food outside of their lodges.

Ask Your Child... if s/he saw a beaver lodge or any signs of beavers preparing for winter? Discuss how lodges help beavers survive during winter.





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COME OUT AND VISIT US
AGAIN DURING
AUTUMN!



Milkweed Race

Objective: To test how far a seed can travel with a little help.

Find some milkweed seeds in the field in front of the sugarhouse. Give your child a milkweed seed or let them search for one. See how far you can make the seed go without letting it drop to the ground or using your hands. How is seed dispersal important to a plant's survival?

Leaf Rubbing

Search for fall leaves while walking on the trails around the Audubon Center. Keep a few of your favorite. With the underside of the leaf up, place a piece of paper over the leaf and rub gently with a crayon to get a leaf rubbing. Examine the shapes and patterns that emerge.

Time to Be a Squirrel

Give an acorn to your child and tell him/her to hide it. One way animals prepare for winter is to store up or cache food. Next, hike around the Audubon Center. At the end of your hike, ask your child to find the acorn s/he hid. If your child is able to find it, s/he is a lucky squirrel who has food for winter. If s/he is unable to locate his/her acorn s/he has helped in dispersing seeds!



AUTUMN ACTIVITIES
TO DO AT HOME
WITH YOUR CHILD



Dioramas

Objective: To create models of animal winter homes.

Take a shoebox or small box and turn the box on it's side. Decorate the upper side to represent the visible ground surface of late fall transitioning into winter and the inside of the box to represent the habitat hidden underneath the surface. What type of organisms live underground? What do they need to survive for winter? Is it dark or light or cozy or lonely?

Read Children Books

Robbins, Ken. *Autumn Leaves*.

Trails; Open 7 days a week from dawn to dusk; donations appreciated.
For more information on our summer camps and public programs for adults, families, and preschoolers check out our seasonal calendar of events on our website.

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