

Nature Journals - *from the State Park Explorer Program*

- Nature is all around us! Nature journals help us to slow down, make observations, and record our stories as we see them.
- You can develop your awareness of the earth through sketches, notes, poetry, photographs, or other creative methods.
- Choose a comfortable spot. You can go to a park or natural area, but you can also journal in your yard or neighborhood. Sit for a while and observe, using all your senses. Look for parts of nature you may not have noticed before.
- Sometimes it helps to ask a few questions: What does it look like? Where does it live? How is it unique? What else is around it?
- Use whatever method you like to record what you observe. Some people like to draw or paint or take pictures; others prefer writing poems or stories or making lists or notes.
- You can use a blank notebook or create your own journal with plain paper and add pages as you go. Loose pages can be stapled together with a cover or added to a binder or folder.
- Be sure to add a date & location to each page. It's fun to look back at your past pages.
- Keep all your supplies in a bag or backpack so you are ready to go anytime you want to add to your journal.

Here are some ideas for supplies you can use in creating your journal. Choose what works best for you:

- Loose paper or a notebook with blank pages
- Clipboard
- Drawing pencils or pens
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Erasers and pencil sharpeners
- Paint (watercolor or tempura) and brushes
- Glue sticks or tape
- Field guides
- Camera
- Magnifying glass
- Journaling bag or backpack



The next page has ideas to get you started on your new journal!

Nature Journal Idea Starters

- Sketches or drawings – add notes if you like
- Leaf & bark rubbings
- Watercolor paintings
- Poetry
- Quotes about nature
- Stories about what you see or hear
- Songs that remind you of nature
- Photographs
- Statistics or fun facts you have learned
- Pressed flowers or leaves
- Nature stamp art (using rocks, acorns, etc.)
- Lists of birds, insects, flowers, etc. you have observed
- Seasons of a tree – use photos or drawings of the same tree in each season
- Record animal tracks
- Paint pictures using flowers or grasses for brushes
- Make maps of your travels in nature
- Create a picture using flower petals, seeds, or grasses
- Sun prints or shadow prints
- Painted leaf prints
- Nature weaving with stems or grasses
- Draw a leaf and write a poem on it
- Use themes: leaf journal, birds in my backyard, flowers in each season, tiny things, insects, etc.
- Don't forget to look up! Clouds, tree canopy, nests, flying birds, etc.
- Shapes in nature
- Phenology: where & when does the sun rise each day, when did you hear the first frog in spring, first butterfly, hummingbird, etc.