

White County
Mini 4-H

Nature



Extension



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Project Requirements

- Exhibit a 22" x 28" stiff-backed horizontal poster, covered in clear plastic, which describes an activity you completed from this curriculum.

OR

- Exhibit a 22" x 28" stiff-backed horizontal poster, covered in clear plastic, which includes two leaf specimens from two different tree types with an identification label, a description of something you learned about each leaf, and a picture of a tree.

Activity #1

Soil Shakes

Soil is where plants grow. It has many ingredients, including nutrients, minerals, decaying matter, water, and gases. Soil also provides homes for animals and insects.

Soil is made up of three particles called sand, silt, and clay. Sand is the largest, silt is medium sized, and clay is the smallest particle. In this activity, we will see how the particles settle in a jar of water.

Materials: glass jar, soil sample, water, paper, pencil

Steps:

1. Fill a glass jar about halfway with water.
2. Add 1/2 to 1 cup of soil to the jar.
3. Shake, shake, shake!
4. Set the jar in a safe place to settle for between 12-24 hours to be able to most clearly see the layers.
5. Hold a piece of paper up against the jar to show where each layer is. Sand will be on the bottom, silt will be in the middle, and clay will be the top layer.



Activity #2

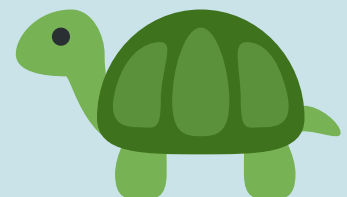
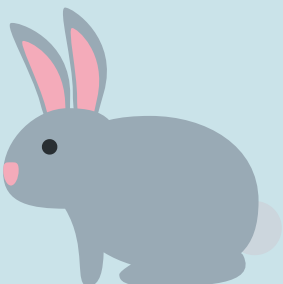
Animal Tracks

In this activity we will be taking a look at local wildlife! It is important to observe animals from a distance. Wildlife we can find in our own backyards include rabbits, squirrels, birds, snakes, turtles, deer, and many more!

Materials: pencil, paper, clipboard to write on, hiking shoes

Steps:

1. Find a safe place to hike with your family.
2. Look for animal tracks in the mud, dirt, or snow (depending on what time of year)
3. Look up what kind of animal the tracks were from.
4. Follow the tracks to see where the animal was heading.
5. Look for at least three tracks from different animals!
6. Share what you've found with family and friends.



Activity #3

Exploring a Mini World!

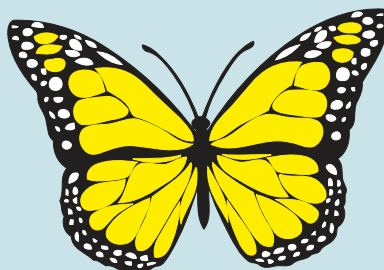
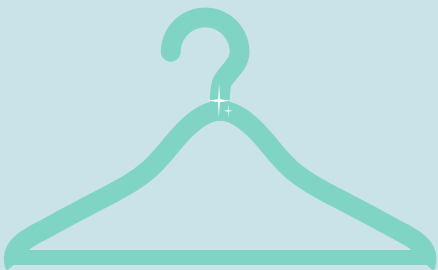
There are so many things happening right under our feet! Be an explorer and take a look at what's going on in one small section of the world.

Materials: wire coat hanger

Steps:

1. Bend the coat hanger into a circle and set it down in a grassy spot.
2. Explore what is going on inside the coat hanger! Pay close attention to the senses you are using: sight, smell, sound, and touch (not taste)!
3. Repeat the experiment in a different location to see what else is out!

Some things you might find are grass, ants, seeds, sticks, leaves, different colors and sounds, rocks, and litter.



Activity #4

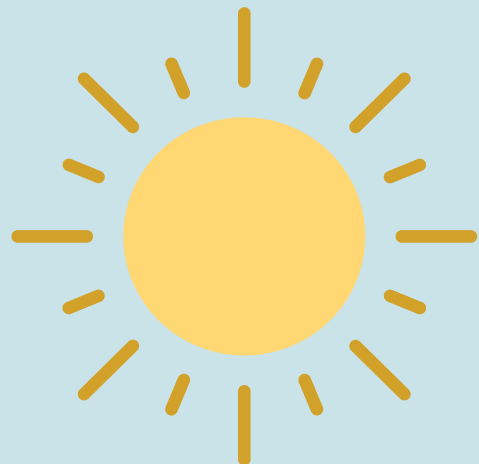
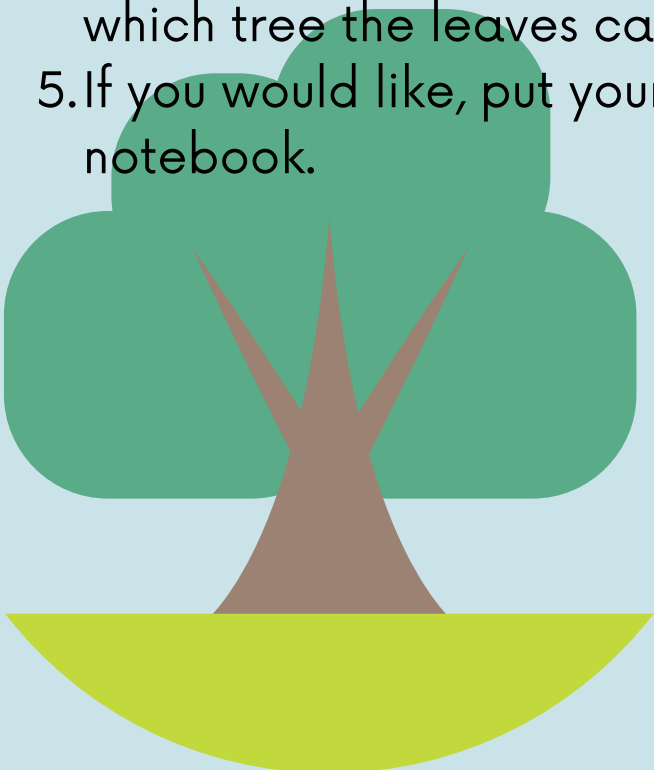
Sun Prints

Indiana has many different types of trees! Some of the common ones are: maple, oak, hickory, sassafras, tulip, pines, and more! One way you can tell trees apart are by their leaves. In this activity we will be taking a closer look at tree leaves and using them to identify a tree!

Materials: colored construction paper, pins, leaves from five different trees, sunshine

Steps:

1. Pin one or more leaves to colored construction paper.
2. Place the paper in bright sunshine.
3. After about an hour, take the leaves off and look for the outline of the leaf on the paper.
4. Collect the prints and use a book or the internet to identify which tree the leaves came from.
5. If you would like, put your leaf collection on a poster or in a notebook.



Activity #5

Rough or Smooth?

The strong middle part of a tree is called a trunk! each year, a tree grows taller and heavier. Not only do they grow taller, but they grow around also. Trees are covered in bark. The bark protects trees from insects, disease, and injury. In this activity we will take a closer look at whether bark is rough or smooth!



Materials: crayons, heavy white paper

Steps:

1. Choose a tree. Hold the paper against the bark of the tree and rub the side of a crayon over the paper. The rough places that stick out on the bark will show up darker on the paper than the smooth.
2. Take a rubbing of at least two different trees and compare the two. What is different between different types of trees?

Activity #6

Recycling Rocks!

Recycling is a way that we can protect nature. Many of the things we use can be recycled and used again, like glass, paper, metal, and plastic. By recycling, we can help cut down on the amount of garbage we produce and limit garbage that animals might eat.

Materials: plastic bottle, aluminum can, newspaper, other items that can be recycled

Steps:

1. Collect items that can be recycled.
2. Try to come up with a way they can be reused.
3. Work with your family to recycle the items, or take them to your local recycling center!



Additional Resources

Indiana 4-H Mini Forestry and Trees Curriculums

Climate Kids- NASA

The Nature Conservancy

Pollinator Partnership

Soils 4 Kids

