



THE GREEN TEAM'S A-Z OF NATURE CONNECTION

nature connection games and activities to do during lockdown

We've put together an A-Z of activities you could try out to explore your local environment and connect with nature. You could incorporate some of these into your daily walk or exercise, and can adapt them to do indoors. You don't need to have a garden or local park to take part!

Rules to follow:

- 1. When collecting natural materials, watch out for nettles, brambles (jaggies) and dog poo. Also only collect items that you find lying on the ground. Do not rip leaves or branches from trees. If you collect wildflowers, make sure there is a lot of it around and do not pull the whole plant out.**
- 2. Please wash your hands after collecting natural items.**
- 3. While you are outside, make sure you follow the social distancing rules, stay 2m apart from people and if you're stopping for a while make sure it's a quiet spot.**

A - ACTIVE ANIMAL FORMS OR YOGA

What to do:

Think about some of your favourite animals, can you move like them? You could stretch like a fox, snuffle about low to the ground like a badger, or jump like a frog! The possibilities are endless!



Why not make up your own animal forms or animal yoga moves?

B - SPRING BLING

Outdoors - collect natural items on your daily walk.

Daisy chains are in fashion this spring. Can you make a bracelet or necklace using other natural materials? e.g ivy, leaves, flowers.

Indoors - make a fashionable accessories from outside/recycled things

Make fashionable accessories from recycled materials or items in the house

- string pasta together with yarn/ wool/ sting to make a necklace or bracelet.
- Use old plastic bags to make a skirt buy cutting a hole in the bottom of the plastic bag. Use a belt to hold up the skirt.
- Cut a cardboard toilet roll in half to make 2 bracelets. If too tight, cut lengthwise and join together with string. Glue on collected flowers and leaves or decorate using felt tip pens.

C - CROWNS

Outdoors - make a spring crown using ivy, cleavers (sticky willy) or willow and make into a circle so that it fits around your head.. Add flowers and leaves to decorate.

Indoors - Fold 2 pieces of A4 in half lengthwise so that it is 10 cm wide and join together with sticky tape so that it fits around your head. Glue on some of the collected leaves and flowers. You can also make paper flowers to stick on or decorate with drawings of flowers.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mkA3cEI2us>

D - DENS

Outdoors - Go to a local woodland and build your own den using large sticks and cover with leaves and smaller sticks. You can build it either as a teepee or a tent shape den.

If there are only small sticks, build a mini-den by propping up the sticks against a tree. Make the inside nice and cosy with leaves. It's perfect for a teddy or other cuddly toy.

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2019/10/how-to-build-a-den/>

Indoors - Build a den under the table, behind a sofa or using a couple of chairs. Use sheets or blankets to hang over the table, sofa or chairs to make a roof and sidewalls. Use clothes pegs to attach the sheets and blankets together and heavy books to stop them from sliding down. Make it extra cosy with pillows and cushions and fairy lights if you have them.

E - EGGS!

Spring is the time when birds lay eggs in a nest. Can you spot a nest and can you see if there are eggs in the nest? Try not to disturb the birds if they are on the nest or close by.

Egg hunt

Why not hide Easter eggs in your garden or in the house. See if you can find all the eggs and time each other to see who is the fastest.

Decorate eggs

Boil eggs and decorate with stickers, felt tip pens or paint. Make stripes, zig-zags, spots or egg people.

F - FLOWERS

On your daily walk, see how many flowers you can spot. Notice the colour of the flower petals and leaves. Take photographs of the flowers.

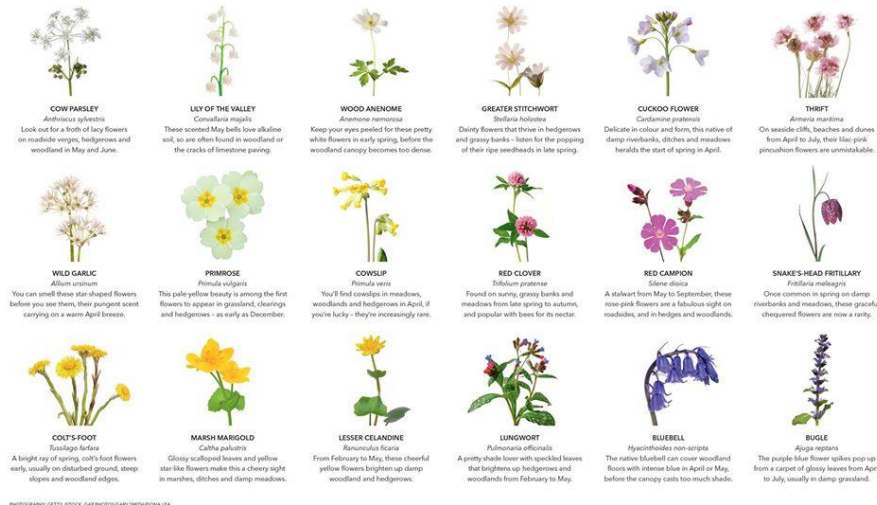
If the flowers are abundant (lots of them), pick a flower and press the flower petals in between 2 sheets of kitchen roll and place inside a heavy or big book. The flower will dry in a few days and can be used to make beautiful cards or pictures.

When back inside, find out what the flowers you photographed are called. Make a drawing or painting of the flowers. Be as accurate or as arty if you want.

Spring's wild flowers

Waitrose Garden
waitrose.com

Head out with WaitroseGarden magazine's guide to country lanes, river banks, woodland and meadows and see how many of these flowers you can spot



from waitrose.com

G - GIFT

On your daily walk, look out for beautiful things in nature e.g stone, leaf, flower, stick, feather, shell. Collect the natural item and give it to a special person e.g friend, family member when you see them next. Tell them why the item is special and why you are giving it to them. Maybe it reminds you of a special time you had together in nature.

Gratitude

At the end of each day, think about what you are grateful for that day. Share your gratitude with your family.

You can keep a journal to write down your gratitude for each day. This could be words, a drawing, a doodle.

Write down your gratitude on a piece of paper, fold in in half and add the piece of paper to your gratitude jar/box. Whenever you are feeling sad or low, read what you have written down on a piece of paper, to remind yourself of your gratitude.

H - HIDE AND SEEK

Play hide and seek in your local woodland.

Count to 20 out loud and everybody (apart from the person counting) hides. Turn around and see if you can spot anybody. Close your eyes and count to 10, the people hiding will try to return to the person counting or get closer. Open your eyes and see if you can spot anybody or who has managed to return. Close your eyes and count to 10 again. This time everybody has to return to

where you are standing. Remember to set clear boundaries at the start. Who had found the best hiding spot? Make it more difficult by adding some camouflage to your clothes or hat. Think about how animals are camouflaged in nature to make it more difficult to spot them.

Play hide and seek indoors.

What are the best hiding places in your house? Under the bed, behind a door or under the sofa. How can you camouflage yourself indoors?

I - INVESTIGATE

What you'll need:

Magnifying glass or magnifying app on phone or tablet
1m length of string/wool

What to do:

Have you ever considered what it would be like to be the size of an ant? Lay the string along a route an ant might take and use the magnifier to look closely. What texture does that leaf have? What might make it hard for an ant to take this route? What about another route?

J - JUMP

What you'll need:

Square of paper
Internet connection

What to do:

Can all animals jump? Big animals like elephants, small ones like frogs and mice? Frogs jump to move away from predators, let's make an origami jumping frog. There are tutorials at ...

<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-an-Origami-Jumping-Frog> and

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vlb2udqPx-M>

The why not have a jumping competition, whose frog can jump the furthest or can land closest to a target?

K - KNIGHTS

What you'll need:

Cardboard
Pens
Decorations
Clothes pegs

What to do:

Make a knight on a horse and have a jousting competition.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=207757947124494>

L - LAUGH

What you need:

3 or more people

What to do:

Lie in a circle so that everyone's head is on someone else's tummy. In turns each person says "Ha", what happens next? If you don't have 3 people, why not try some laughter yoga ...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsCkXauJvIc>

M - MEMORY

What you'll need:

10-20 small objects (from either outside or inside)

Large scarf/tea towel/towel

What to do:

Everyone collects the objects from around the house or from nature on a walk. One person arranges them without the others seeing and covers them with a scarf/tea towel etc. The others, the memorisers, get a short time to look at the objects and then they are covered up again. One object is removed, then the memorisers can look again and work out what was removed. What tactics help you remember what was there before? To make this harder include more objects or rearrange rather than remove an object. If playing outside, another extension of the game is for players to recreate the pattern created by the objects by collecting the necessary leaves/sticks etc.

N - NOISE

What you'll need:

A place to sit, outside or inside

What to do:

Sit, close your eyes and listen. What 5 things can you hear? What are the loudest things you can hear? What about the quietest? What sounds can you hear close to you? What about far away? There is no need to write these down or speak them outloud or even name them. How do the noises around you change at different times of day? What about in outside vs inside places?

O - OBSERVE

What you'll need:

Paper

Pencils

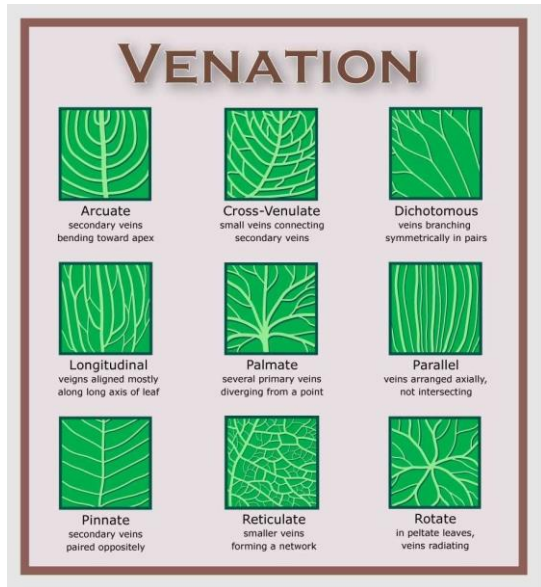
Eraser

(paints if you'd like)

What to do:

On a walk, choose a leaf that you think is beautiful. Observe it closely, can you draw it with all the detail? You could draw around the leaf and then fill in the detail if easier. What pattern do the veins on the leaf make?

What about observing a plant without picking it, can you draw it then? Accurate observations and drawings, can be used instead of photographs to help scientists identify plants and animals.



P - PORTRAITS

What you'll need:

Floor space, outside or in

What to do:

Using found objects, can you make a portrait of yourself?

Q - QUACK!

What you'll need:

Blind fold

2 or more people

What to do:

Ducks communicate with 'quack', could we communicate without using words? In this game the aim is to get one blindfolded player from the start to the end, around a series of obstacles that they have not seen. As a pair/group decide what sounds you use to communicate with the blindfolded person, will the blindfolded person reply? Once you have decided on communication and who will be blindfolded, blindfold them and decide on the course. Outside this could be between and around trees or shrubs, inside this might be between rooms with objects that they have to touch or avoid. You can try many different routes, different people being blindfolded and different ways to communicate.

R - RAINBOW

What you'll need:

Paper

Tape / glue stick

What to do:

Head out on an adventurous walk and see if you can find lots of different coloured things to make up a rainbow picture. Can you find natural objects that are red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple? Collect some bits and pieces and stick them to your paper to make a nature rainbow!

S - STICKS!

What you'll need:

Sticks!

What to do:

How many things can you do with a stick? Can you find the perfect stick for a magic wand? Or a staff? If you have a penknife you could whittle your stick and make a spear, or decorated staff. You could find a few sticks and weave them together to make a stick picture frame. You could build stick pagodas and play stick jenga! How many sticks can you stack on top of each other without your tower falling over?!

T - TRACKS AND TRAILS

What you'll need:

A keen eyesight and good sniffing nose

What to do:

Can you spot any animal trails or tracks on your walk? Look out for footprints in the mud, bits of grass that have been trampled down. Lots of animals like to use the same trails while they move about, can you find a trail and see if you can guess who it belongs to? Are there any animal hairs snagged on logs or fences? Can you find any poo that might suggest an animal has snuck by?

If you are indoors you could have a go at creating your own track, making up a trail and hiding something at the end of it. Can anyone follow your trail and find the treasure?

Match the tracks

Match the print to the animal, and the animal to the picture!

Woodland Trust
naturedetectives

deer
deer hooves make long prints like sausages with pointy ends

heron
herons have big feet and long toes to help them balance and stop them sinking in the mud

squirrel
squirrels leave complicated tracks, lots of pad and claw marks

otter
otters have five toes, you can sometimes see webbing between them

dog
dog paw prints have four toes with claw marks and a rear pad

badger
badgers have five toes and the large pad behind them is shaped like a fishy

duck
ducks have webbed feet to help them swim, they leave very distinctive marks in the mud

fox
foxes have four toes, the rear pad is usually the same size as the toes

Start your own adventure at naturedetectives.org.uk

U - UPCYCLE

What you'll need:

An item that you think belongs in the bin

What to do:

Can you repurpose an old item that might otherwise end up in the bin? You could find a new artistic use for some old plastic bottles or recyclable things. There are some excellent ideas below:

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-families/family-wild-challenge/activities/upcycling-for-nature/>

V - VERY HOT CHOCOLATE!

What you'll need:

Hot chocolate
Thermos flask

What to do:

Make up a thermos flask with your favourite hot drink (tea, coffee or hot chocolate), pack it in your bag, wrap up warm and head out for an adventure in the evening. Find a quiet spot to sit in the chilly evening air - it could be on the pavement, under a favourite tree, in your garden or even your living room (pretend you're camping out!). Feel cosy as you sip your hot chocolate in the outdoors (or indoors!), make sure it's very hot, or else it doesn't count for V. Treat yourself with some marshmallows and cream too, go on...!

W - WHITTLING

What you'll need:

A penknife

A stick (live wood will work best)

What to do:

Carving or whittling a stick is a great way to pass the time. Find a good stick on your walk - green wood will work best but deadwood is fine too if it's all you can find and you don't have a way to remove a bit of tree!

Using your penknife you can carve your stick into anything you fancy - you could make a spear, or a wand, or fashion a spoon if you've got the skills!

X - X MARKS THE SPOT!

What you'll need:

Pen and paper

Treasure (could be a toy, or a natural gift)

What to do:

Draw a map of your local area, it could be your garden or an area in your local park, or even your house! Be sure to put lots of detail on your map! Hide a treasure somewhere in the area and put a big X on your map where it's hidden. You could mark the treasure with an X in real life if you'd like! Give your map to someone else and see if they can follow it and find the treasure!

Y - YOUR OWN SIT SPOT

What you'll need:

Nothing

What to do:

Find a spot close to your house, it could be in your garden or on the pavement, all you need is to be able to see something nice - it could be a nice tree, or a bush or even a beautiful landscape of mountains, valleys and sky (if you are lucky enough to have this close by!)

Spend time sitting in your own sit spot every day for at least 30 minutes, don't take your phone or a watch, just allow yourself some time to be there.

Can you spot any birds that come nearby regularly? What do their calls sound like? Are they nesting? Are there any plants or buds opening up?

You can chill out here as much as you like and watch the changes and get to know what stays the same.

l - lll...

What you'll need:

Tent

Sleeping bag or duvet

Your very hot chocolate...

What to do:

Spend a night under the stars if you have a garden. You could pitch a tent, or build a den or bivvy out (sleep without a tent!) If you don't have a garden, you could build a den in your house and pretend you're having a campout. Remember your very hot chocolate!

Zen

Find your zen, sit in your favourite spot outside every day, as much as possible. Chill out, listen to the birds and see what gifts nature can give you.