

# DIY Nature Programming at Your Library

## *It's As Easy as 1-2-3!*

Help address “Nature-Deficit Disorder”\* in your community by trying some of these easy, minimal preparation nature programs in your library!

### **Building/Play Skills: Gnome Home or Fairy House**

Big idea: Everyone needs a home, even mythical creatures! Garden fairies and gnomes have many fun myths associated with them. This activity involves children (and adults!) using their creativity and natural materials to build a home to attract a fairy or gnome.

1. Read a story with the group about garden fairies and/or gnomes, and share some pictures from an informational text about fairy houses or animals who make their homes in tiny spaces or underground.
2. Proceed outside and give children or families the chance to build their own fairy houses or gnome homes using natural materials, such as sticks, leaves, pinecones, bark, and stones. Alternately, these materials can be brought into the library for a make-and-take craft.
3. When the group is done, have everyone go on a tour of the homes, while the builders narrate.

Materials: books, outdoor space with “loose parts” for fairy house construction, toy fairies or gnomes (optional)

#### Suggested texts:

Literary: *Fairy Houses*, by Tracy Kane

Informational: *Fairy Houses...Everywhere!*, by Tracy and Barry Kane

### **Identification Skills: Birdfeeder Watch**

Big idea: Nature programming may be as simple as setting up a birdfeeder in the yard of your library within sight of a window, and encouraging patrons to check it out regularly to identify visiting birds and post their findings.

1. Set up a birdfeeder, as well as a display with a variety of books about birds for all ages.
2. Encourage patrons to view the birdfeeder while they visit. Have display copies of field guides, posters, and bird identification cards handy for visitors to identify who is visiting the feeder. Binoculars would be great, too!
3. Provide a pad of sticky notes for visitors to write the species they see, and stick them on an empty wall near feeder viewing. If you are so inclined, graph the number of each species spotted weekly and post it, highlighting uncommon species sighted.

Materials: bird feeder and seed, books (including field guides and ID posters/cards), binoculars, sticky notes

#### Suggested resources:

Literary: *My Busy Green Garden*, by Terry Pierce and Carol Schwartz

Informational: *Sibley's Backyard Birding Flashcards*, by David Sibley

## Observation Skills: Hula Hoop Worlds

**Big idea:** Sometimes nature may be right under our noses, and we don't even realize it! There can be entire tiny worlds inside a hula hoop outside. In this activity, we will explore the life happening in a very small area.

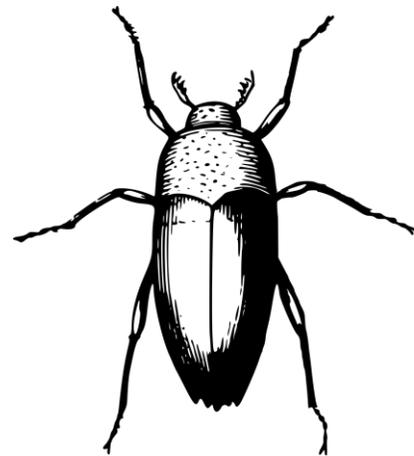
1. Read a story with the group about small life in small spaces, and share some pictures from informational texts.
2. Bring hula hoops, magnifying glasses, and field guides to an outside space near your library, and have families observe and note what is happening inside their hoops. The more you look, the more you see! Use field guides to identify insects and other life you may find.
3. Circle up when activity has concluded to talk about what everyone found!

**Materials:** hula hoops, magnifying glasses, books (including field guides)

### Suggested texts:

Literary: *Some Bugs*, by Angela DiTerlizzi

Informational: *Don't Squash That Bug!: The Curious Kid's Guide to Insects*, by Natalie Rompella



\*Nature-Deficit Disorder was coined by author Richard Louv in his 2005 book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*.

More on Nature Deficit Disorder from the Children & Nature Network: <http://www.childrenandnature.org/>

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