

Nature Niche

Nature By The Yard – Fostering a Natural Sense of Wonder

Autumn, 2006

Volume 4 Issue 2 Calendar of Events

Please call the hosting organization for reservation information.

Toddler Walk 10-11am
Wed. Sept. 13.
Thurs. Oct. 12
Fri. Nov. 17
Wed. Dec. 13
For kids 18-36 months with parent. Buttinger Nature Center. Pennington NJ (609) 737-7592. Fee

Nature Inside Out
Thursdays from 11-12 noon. For kids 3-6 years old.
Sept. 21. "Spiders"
Oct. 26 "Leaves"
Cotsen Children's Library Princeton NJ (609) 258-2697 Free

Is your child having a birthday soon?

Nature By The Yard can meet you at your home or a nearby park for an exciting and unique party. Call us for a brochure or to discuss possible dates. (609) 610-6292

(continued)

On the Move

Autumn is the time many animals prepare for winter. One way is to move to warmer lands. We too made a move this summer so it seems fitting to talk a little about migration.

What a stressful and difficult time. We were only moving 11 miles but for all the aggregation and time it took, we may as well have moved across the country.

When animals migrate, they aren't simply moving from one space to another. They don't

pack up their belongings and hire a van as we did. They pack on the fat, and start flying, swimming, or walking. The mode of transportation depends on the animal.

Most animals migrate because their breeding grounds don't offer the same resources in the summer as they do in winter. Monarch butterflies, some birds, fish and polar bears are a few examples of animals that

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Nuts to You

I always get a sense of nostalgia when the grocery stores begin carrying mixed nuts in the produce section. This is my signal that my favorite season is officially here.

The fall harvest of walnuts, hazelnuts, brazil nuts and pecans shows nature's bounty for humans, but what about the animals that depend on nuts for winter caches?

Nuts from trees make up a large percentage of birds' and mammals' diet in the winter. They are rich in fat and protein

and offer wildlife a diet that supports them when food isn't readily available.

Bear, turkey and deer eat nuts, especially acorns, but many such as woodpeckers, squirrels and chipmunks also store them in the ground or lodged in trees for later consumption.

When a nut is found, it is often inspected for cracks or holes. If none are found, the nut is buried in a shallow hole and covered or it is brought to special hiding place. Chipmunks create a bed of acorns for their winter supply.

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Coming Soon!!!

In the next few months, watch for the highly anticipated book "Nature Inside Out-A guide to using the schoolyard as a teaching tool" by Pam Newitt.

This book is designed to offer educators, parents, naturalist, camp directors and scout leaders with fun, educational and curriculum supporting programs that incorporate science, art, reading and math into a comprehensive guide.

Call or e-mail me for more information or to reserve you copy.

pam@naturebytheyard.com

We're on the Web

See us at:

www.naturebytheyard.com

Migration (continued)

migrate. But how do they manage it?

To prepare for this great feat, animals must first put on fat reserves. This move can take weeks or even months, so it is important that they either fatten up before they leave, or follow their food south.

The record holder for furthest migration goes to the Arctic Tern. They breed in Maine, and points north and winter in Antarctica.

After the young fledge a mere

90 days after their parents' arrival, they begin their journey south passed the coast of Africa then continue to Antarctica. Round trip, they can travel a staggering 22,000 miles. That is just 3000 miles short of traveling around the globe! And I thought 11 miles was going to be the end of me.

I guess next time I move, I'll try to remember... Nah, there won't be a next time. Boy, am I glad I'm not a bird.

Nuts (continued)

Since they don't actually hibernate but fall into a kind of torpor, they wake frequently through the winter and reach for a snack. This brings a whole new meaning to breakfast in bed when your bed *is* your breakfast.

Squirrels hide their nuts in holes throughout the forest floor. They only find about 1% of the nuts they hide, but will find other squirrel's nuts. Those not found by these hungry rodents grow. If the

saplings aren't eaten by rabbits or deer, they can grow into fruit bearing trees.

The most common nut producing trees in our area are oaks, hickories, and black walnuts.

Joke for your kids: How do you attract a squirrel?

Answer: Climb up a tree and act like a nut.

Suggested picture books for you and your children
"Nuts to You" Lois Ehlert
"Squirrel and the Moon" Eleanor Schmid

About Our Organization...

Nature By The Yard was started in January, 2001. We offer fun, hands-on, nature education programs to schools, scouts, camps, libraries, birthday parties, garden clubs, nature centers, wildflower preserves or any organized group. We also provided

workshops for teachers on using the schoolyard as a classroom tool as well as offer advice and expertise on designing school yard habitats. For details on our services visit www.naturebytheyard.com or call Pam at (609) 610-6292