

Nature Niche

Nature By The Yard – Fostering a Natural Sense of Wonder

Summer, 2006

Volume 3 Issue 2
: Calendar of Events

Please call the hosting organization for reservation information.

Nature Inside Out
Kids 3-6 years. 11-12am Cotsen Library Princeton 258-2697
June 8 "Nests"
July 20 "Butterflies"
August 10 "Trees"

"Moonlight Walk"
Sat. June 10 8-9:30 Families. BHWP (215) 862-2924 fee

Tiny Tot Walk June 13. 10-11am. Kids. 18-36 months. Pennington, NJ (609) 737-7592. Fee

NEW!!!

Wilds of Princeton
Kids 8-10 yrs. 9-10:30
June 28 Community Park North
July 19 Woodfield Res.
Aug. 9 Princeton Inst.
Call Cotsen Library for info and reservations 258-2697. free

Library Programs:
Paws, Claws, Scales and
(continued)

Beat the Heat

It used to be that I'd dread the summer. When June would come around and my colleagues and I would start planning summer camp, I was always the first to volunteer to clean up and set up. It wasn't that I didn't want to be outside, well actually, it was. I couldn't take the Washington, DC, 3H's weather: Hazy, Hot and Humid. That was until I started paying attention to the animals in and around the park. They knew

how to beat the heat. And I'm going to share some of their secrets with you.

First thing is dress for success. Mammals shed their winter coat in spring to prepare for summer. Wear light-weight, light colored clothes that fit loosely. Dark colored, tight clothes will not only absorb heat, but also suck up all the beneficial sweat your body produces. Sweating is your body's natural defense

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Don't Rest on the Laurels

With the spring wildflowers withered and gone, you might think the only way you'll see flowers is to endure the blazing heat of a meadow, but fear not, nature has some surprises for you. The shrubs of summer are just coming into their own and you need only to walk woodland paths to see some of the most spectacular showy blooms. Rhododendrons, Azaleas, Viburnums and Laurels all stand out in late spring and early summer against the newly emerged green leaves. By far, my favorite flowering shrub is the Mountain Laurel in the

genus *Kalmia*. *Kalmia* is named after a Swedish botanist, Pehr Kalm. A student of Linnaeus, Pehr Kalm collected hundreds of plant specimens for Linnaeus' research. When he brought them back to Europe, Linnaeus rewarded him by naming the Laurels, one of Kalm's favorite plant groups, after him.

An evergreen shrub, Mountain Laurel can grow to 30 feet in the south, but it usually tops out at 5-10 feet throughout most of its range. Mountain Laurel thrives in rocky well-drained, acidic soil and will

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Tails

Calendar Continued

July 12 10:30 Hickory
Corner 448-1330

July 13 7pm

Hillsborough 908 369-2200

July 14 2pm Ewing 882-
3130

July 17 11am Cranford Lib.
(908) 709-7272 ext. 12

July 18 12:45 Lambertville

July 31 4-5pm Hightstown
(609) 448-1474

August 19 11am NJ Library
for the Blind, Trenton, NJ

August 28 10am Toddler
Walk. Kids 18-36 months.
Buttinger Nature Center,
Pennington, NJ 737-7592
fee

Got a summer or fall birthday coming up?

Nature By The Yard can meet you at your home or a nearby park for an exciting and different party. We can do a Stream Splash where we'll learn about the critters in a stream, an Insect Safari or many other cool topics to choose from. Call us for a brochure or to discuss possible dates.

We're on the Web

See us at:

www.naturebytheyard.com

Beat the Heat (continued)

against over heating. I don't mean stop wearing your "Ban roll-on", but allow your body to sweat by having your clothes billow instead of cling.

Another important thing I learned from the animals is to drink plenty of water. Keeping your body hydrated will replenish the water it lost while sweating.

Wear a hat. Seems like a contradiction since wearing a hat in winter keeps you warmer, but wearing a wide brimmed hat

will shade your face and keep the sun's rays off your head.

By far, the most important and useful thing I learned from animals to beat the summer heat was to stop moving.

Animals are least active between 11-3 because it's HOT and moving generates heat. So grab your lemonade and take a nap, lay on the hammock or just read in the shade. Isn't that what summer's all about anyway?

Mountain Laurel (continued)

flower in the dense shade of the forest as well as in the full sun. It seems the more sun it gets, the more pink the flowers.

The beauty of the flowers is a welcome sight, but more interesting is the pollination strategy the flower uses to produce seeds.

The flower is shaped like an umbrella with its 5 petals fused into a bowl. The 5 stamens (male part) radiate from the center and are tucked into 5 pockets evenly spaced at the

edge of the petals.

When a bee lands on the flower, these stamens break free of the pocket and thwack it on the back and head, dusting her with pollen. When the bee visits another flower, the pollen is transferred to the second flower and pollination can occur allowing the plant to make seeds.

Mountain Laurel will also reproduce vegetatively; where the branches touch the ground, they can take root.

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 outdoors as a classroom as well as offer advice and expertise on designing school yard habitats. For details on our services visit www.naturebytheyard.com or call (609) 610-6292