

# Nature Niche

## *Nature By The Yard – Fostering a Natural Sense of Wonder*

Summer, 2007

### **Volume 4 Issue 2 Calendar of Events**

*Please call the hosting organization for reservation information.*

Tues. June 5 10-11am.  
**Toddler Walk** Kids ages 18-36 months with adult. Buttinger Nature Center. Pennington, NJ (609) 737-7592. Fee

Tues. June 5 4-5:30pm  
**Wonder Walk.** Kids 2-4 grade. Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve. New Hope, Pa. (215) 862-2924. Free for members admission for non members.

Fri. July 13 10-11am  
**Toddler Walk** Kids ages 18-36 months with adult. Buttinger Nature Center. Pennington, NJ (609) 737-7592. Fee

Fri. July 20 5-7:30pm  
**Care of Magical Creatures.** Families. Lambertville Library (609) 397-0275 Free

Fri. July 20 8-9 pm  
**Care of Magical Creatures.** Families. Jazams Toy Store

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## **Green: the new black**

**I** get really weird on Earth Day. I'm not sure what my problem is, but I usually get very judgmental and self righteous. I think my holier than thou alter ego rears her ugly head. Why does everyone suddenly remember we have to take care of the earth on April 22? What about the other 364 days? That's when I got to thinking. I've gotten pretty lazy in the green department. I too often take the easy way, instead of

the environmentally friendly way. Then I had what I like to think of as a Grinch moment. Remember the scene from *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas* when the Grinch suddenly realizes why the Who's are still singing? "He puzzled and puzzled till his puzzler was sore. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before." Perhaps Earth Day means just a little bit more.

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## **Hummingbirds**

**T**he incessant squeaking was a dead giveaway. I knew immediately ruby-throated hummingbirds were back. These acrobatic flyers are the only hummingbirds we have east of the Mississippi and offer an amazing display of deft defying tricks as they maneuver through the air.

**I** remember the first time I saw one, I thought it was a cicada buzzing by, then it hovered to sip nectar from a red zinnia.

**H**ummers do some truly amazing things. They can beat their

wings 75 times per second. They can fly forwards, backwards, upside down, sideways, and do loop-de-loops. They are one of the only birds around here where the female is just as territorial as the male. In fact, I always smile when I see the box of my hummingbird feeder where there are four birds feeding at the same time. That's something you'd never see in the wild.

**M**any of the hummingbirds we have here, travel from Central and South America where they spend their winter. That's a

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Princeton Shopping Center  
(609) 466-3910. Free.

Sat. July 21 10-4 pm.  
**Discovery Day Families.**  
Bowman's Hill Wildflower  
Preserve. New Hope, Pa.  
(215) 862-2924. Free

Thurs. July 26 2-3 pm.  
**Animal Life Cycles All  
Ages.** Yardley Library  
(215) 493-9898. Free

Sat. July 29 7:30-9 pm  
**Moonlight Walk All Ages.**  
Bowman's Hill Wildflower  
Preserve (215) 862-2924  
Fee.

Tues. Aug. 14 10-11 am.  
**Toddler Walk Kids 18-36  
months with adult.**  
Buttinger Nature Center  
Pennington, NJ (609) 737-  
7592. Fee

Don't forget to read  
with your kids this  
summer. Try non-  
fiction for a change.  
Select a topic both  
you and your kids  
are interested in  
and learn together.

### **We're on the Web**

See us at:

[www.naturebytheyard.com](http://www.naturebytheyard.com)

## **Green (continued)**

**I** thought of things, little things, I could do to make just a small difference with almost no effort on my part. I got canvas bags for my kids' snack instead of using paper bags every day. Bam, I can save 360 paper bags a school year. I'm changing my trash carrier because the one I have now I've come to learn doesn't recycle cardboard. I've been using canvas grocery bags instead of plastic or paper. The plastic bags I have still, I use for lining my trash cans. I

unplug my cell phone charger. Ka-ching, \$35 worth of electricity a saved a year. Little changes, big green pay back.

**So** maybe Earth Day isn't the commercial band wagon everyone jumps on to be cool. Maybe it's a gentle reminder to those of us with a suppressed environmental conscience to try just a little harder. Look a little further down the road. Small steps made by many can have a bigger impact than you think. Boy is my puzzler sore.

## **Hummingbirds (continued)**

2200 mile trek one way for a bird that weighs less than a nickel!

**Ruby-throated** hummingbirds feed on nectar from plants, but also eat spiders and small insects. Whether they actually hunt them or inadvertently consume them while feeding is a mystery to me.

**Hummers** are attracted primarily to red, but will also visit pink and purple tubular shaped flowers. Of course, you can offer a feeder as well. Boil

four parts water, remove from heat and add one part sugar.

**When** you see a hummingbird feeding watch him carefully. Notice they never fly directly up to a flower or feeder but zoom up, pause then proceed with caution. In their tropical wintering site, the eye-lash viper often waits in flowers so he can eat them. Their wary nature no doubt is a learned behavior to look for the snake before approaching a flower to feed.

## **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](http://www.naturebytheyard.com) or call Pam at (609) 610-6292