

Nature Niche

Nature By The Yard – Fostering a Natural Sense of Wonder

Summer, 2009
Volume 6, Issue 2
Calendar of Events

Please call the hosting organization for reservation information.

Toddler Walks.

June 9, July 14 and Aug. 11. 11-12pm. Kids ages 18-36 months with adult. Plainsboro Twp. Bldg. 609-799-0909 ext. 332 Fee

Toddler Walks.

June 11, July 13 and Aug. 7. 10-11am. Kids ages 18-36 months with adult. Buttinger Nature Center. Pennington, NJ (609) 737-7592. Fee

Sat. June 13 1-2:30pm

Insect Hunt. Families. Join me as we look for insects and allies in the meadow, examine them and release them unharmed. Free for members. Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve New Hope, Pa. 215.862.2924.

Family Fun Walk In Five Mile Woods. Sundays, June 21, July 19, Aug. 16 3:30-5pm \$5/person, \$15/family. Advanced registration required. Nature By The Yard. 609.610.6292.

(continued)

Oooo, That Smell!!!

I heard this song the other day that made me smile. Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Oooo, That Smell". I never understood the meaning of that song, but it must have been written in summer.

I was walking my son home from school the other day and as we passed a neighbor's house, he said, "Mom, what's that smell?" We looked up to find we were standing under a black locust tree in full flower. The white hanging flowers present a

strong sweet smell for anyone incline to notice. It got me thinking. Summer really smells! Most good, a few not so good, but there are some very distinct smells you only encounter in the summer.

For me, newly mowed grass, low tide at the beach, the first rain on hot pavement, and ripe, warm strawberries are all nostalgic smells of summer. Sweet smelling Japanese honeysuckle

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Poison Ivy

"Leaves of three, let it be. Leaves of five, let it thrive." We've all heard it, but is it accurate?

Poison ivy is a nuisance to many of us, but learning to recognize it in all seasons is the best defense to protect ourselves from the rash and help avoid getting rid of desirable plants such as Jack in the pulpit or raspberries by mistake.

Poison ivy, *Toxicodendron radicans*, is a woodland plant that contains one of the most potent oils known, called Urushiol. It is this oil that causes the contact dermatitis

many of us associate with the plant.

You will find poison ivy growing in two ways here in the mid-Atlantic region—a low growing perennial and a hairy vine.

What appears as three leaves, is actually one leaf divided into three parts called leaflets. There are two side leaflets (known as lateral leaflets) which grow opposite each other and one terminal leaflet which grows perpendicular to the lateral leaflets. The lateral leaflets' edges are randomly toothed and the main vein isn't

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Get Creative At Your Library

Free programs at these local libraries: Mon. June 22 Ewing 3pm 609.882.130

July 7 New Hope Solebury 10:30 215.862.2330

July 8 Riverton 7pm 856.829.2476

July 9 Lambertville 609-397-0275

July 13 West Windsor 4pm 609.799.0462

July 16 Morrisville 10:30 215.295-4850

July 17 Hightstown 10:30 609.448.1474

Sun. July 12 2pm **Stream Study**
Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve
215.862.2924. Families. Fee for non-members.

Sat. July 18 10-4pm **Discovery Day.** Children's music, crafts, food, fun for the entire family. Drop by the Insect Safari and say hi. BHWP. New Hope. Pa. No reservations FREE 215.862.2924

Mon. July 20-Fri. July 24 1-3pm **Nature in your Neighborhood Summer Camp.** Kids grades 2-4 can join me as we explore the nature that lives right in our backyard. Pennsbury Community School <www.pennsbury.k12.pa.us> Fee

Sat. Aug. 15 10-4pm **Butterfly Festival** Buttinger Nature Center Pennington, NJ 609.737.7592 No reservations needed. Fee.

Mon. Aug. 17-21 9am-12 noon **Nature Summer Camp** Five Mile Woods. Kids 9-12 years old. We'll discover the many aspects of nature that make up this unique woodland. Nature By The Yard (609) 610-6292. Fee

We're on the Web

<naturebytheyard.com>

Smells (continued)

conjures up images of my childhood, where my friends and I would pluck the flowers, pinch the back, draw out the filament and lick the tiny droplet of nectar. Not all are as sweet as that though.

The flowers of the Chinese Chestnut are a real nose wrinkler. The long white blooms release a pungent semen-like smell. And Boxwood shrubs often are described as smelling like cat urine.

The reason for scent in flowers

is obvious. Flowers release a smell to attract an insect, which in turn pollinates the flower, so it can make seeds. Without pollination, most plants would be unable to reproduce.

Bees and moths are attracted to sweet smelling flowers while flies and beetles are often attracted to foul, putrid smells.

Next time you're out, stop and smell the roses or honeysuckle, or even the Chinese Chestnut. Hmm, maybe not the chestnut.

Enjoy all of nature's gifts.

Poison Ivy (continued)

centered.

The leaf stem called the petiole, can have a reddish tinge and the leaflets are often shiny in the spring as they emerge.

You need to make contact the urushiol in order to get a rash, but the oil can remain potent for up to 5 years on a surface.

Do not burn poison ivy.

Poison ivy berries are one of the most important winter foods for birds.

If you've come in contact with poison ivy, wash the area with

soap and water immediately.

Jewelweed, *Impatiens capensis* is a natural antidote that may prevent development of the rash.

Don't swing from hairy vines.

So what about the leaves of 5? That describes another woodland vine, Virginia Creeper. *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* which to the very sensitive, can also cause a mild rash. Guess that little poem isn't so accurate after all.

About Our Organization...

Nature By The Yard was started in January, 2001. We offer fun, hands-on nature education programs for schools, scouts, camps, libraries, birthday parties, garden clubs, nature centers, wildflower preserves and other organized groups. We also provide

workshops for teachers on using the schoolyard as a classroom tool as well as offer advice and expertise on designing school yard habitats. Check out our the new weblog at <http://naturebytheyard.com/> or call Pam at (609) 610-6292.