Beverly J Martin Elementary Spring Nature Walk
BJM to Ithaca Children's Garden
A Springtime scavenger hunt was created for students at Beverly J. Martin Elementary School, guiding students from the doors of BJM to the Ithaca Childrens’ Garden.

The lower level scavenger hunt was based on sensory stimulation, and the higher level hunt combines observation and critical thinking. Research indicates that young children learn primarily through their senses and through hands-on manipulation and exploration (Wilson, 2000), and experts suggest that early childhood educators encourage students to use all of their senses and provide them with outdoor excursions to build essential observation skills. (Humphryes, 2012). This is of particular importance now, during a time when many young children spend most of their time within settings and activities that keep them largely isolated from the natural world (Wilson, 2000).

The benefits of exploring in nature affect more than children’s observation skills. Exposure to nature has also been associated with better motor coordination and greater attention capacity (Grahn et al. 1997), as well as greater levels of social interaction and development of social relationships. (Wells in press). In addition, it has been found that the presence of nature may buffer the impact of life stress on children (Wells, 2003). This scavenger hunt provides a framework for students at BJM to experience nature while improving their observational and analytic skills.
**Lower Level**

Name: 
Date: 
Season: 

What is the weather like today? ________________________________

Check things off your list one by one as you experience them using your five senses: 
- sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste

**Things to SEE in nature:**
- A short tree with blossoms  
  What color are they? ________________________________
- A tiny wildflower  
  What color is it? ________________________________
- A big wildflower  
  What color is it? ________________________________
- Two leaves that are a different shade of green
- An ant
- A flying bag
- Something moving in the breeze
- A flat stone
- Mud

**Things to HEAR in nature:**
- A bird chirping
- Water running
- A frog or toad

**Things to FEEL in nature:**
- Something warm from the sun
- Something cool in the shade
- Something moist or wet
- Something soft or smooth
- Something rough
- A flower petal

**Things to SMELL in nature:**
- A wildflower
- The grass

**Never TASTE** things in nature without asking an adult first!

**Upper Level**

**Nature Scavenger Hunt**

Instructions:
As you travel down the street, use the clues hidden in the poem to identify natural elements.
1. Spot the element in nature
2. Check the Scavenger Hunt Map to find the matching photograph
3. Fill in the clue blanks, linking the description with the printed photograph

*** For extra fun, take your own photographs of natural elements you spot!

**Clues for the Hunt**

Before we embark on our outdoor adventure
We must make sure not to ignore
The nature we see almost every day:
It's growing outside of our door!

As you exit the school you'll be sure to discover
a place where the birds come to dine.
Below it a grouping of two springtime flowers
And chips that have come from a pine.

We'll now cross the road to continue our journey
And pass by two flowering trees.
Keep watch for pink tulips, a oddly-shaped planting,
And pine trees that line up in threes.

Take note of the vine slowly squeezing a porch
And the tall tree beside the blue house.
Look close to the ground and surrounded by wood,
And you may find a home for a mouse.

Before you proceed, take a peek 'round the corner
And look at what's under your feet.
Some brown things are crunching while flowers come springing
Right through the old, crumbling concrete
What is the weather like today? __________________________________________________________

Check things off your list one by one as you experience them using your five senses:

**sight**, **hearing**, **touch**, **smell**, and **taste**

**Things to SEE in nature:**
- A short tree with blossoms
  What color are they? ________________________________
- A tiny wildflower
  What color is it? ________________________________
- A big wildflower
  What color is it? ________________________________
- Two leaves that are a different shade of green
- An ant
- A flying bug
- Something moving in the breeze
- A flat stone
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Nature Scavenger Hunt

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1. Spot the element in nature
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3. Fill in the clue blanks, linking the description with the printed photograph
   *** For extra fun, take your own photographs of natural elements you spot!

Clues for the Hunt

Before we embark on our outdoor adventure
We must make sure not to ignore
The nature we see almost every day:
It’s growing outside of our door!

As you exit the school you’ll be sure to discover
a place where the birds come to dine.
Below it a grouping of two springtime flowers
And chips that have come from a pine.

We’ll now cross the road to continue our journey
And pass by two flowering trees.
Keep watch for pink tulips, a, oddly-shaped planting,
And pine trees that line up in threes.

Take note of the vine slowly squeezing a porch
And the tall tree beside the blue house.
Look close to the ground and surrounded by wood,
And you may find a home for a mouse.

Before you proceed, take a peek ‘round the corner
And look at what’s under your feet.
Some brown things are crunching while flowers come springing
Right through the old, crumbling concrete

Upper Level
Instructions:
As you travel down the street, use the clues hidden in the poem to identify natural elements.

1. Spot the element in nature
2. Check the Scavenger Hunt Map to find the matching photograph
3. Fill in the clue blanks, linking the description with the printed photograph

*** For extra fun, take your own photographs of natural elements!

Before we embark on our outdoor adventure, we must make sure not to ignore the nature we see almost every day: It's growing outside of our door!

As you exit the school, you'll be sure to discover a place where the birds come to dine.
Below it a grouping of two springtime flowers
And chips that have come from a pine.

We'll now cross the road to continue our journey
And pass by two flowering trees.
Keep watch for pink tulips, a oddly-shaped planting,
And pine trees that line up in threes.

Take note of the vine slowly squeezing a porch
And the tall tree beside the blue house.
Look close to the ground and surrounded by wood,
And you may find a home for a mouse.

Before you proceed, take a peek round the corner
And look at what's under your feet.
Some brown things are crunching while flowers come springing
Right through the old, crumbling concrete.

Now walk by the archway made all out of twigs
And find the tree shaped like a "Y".
Be careful to notice the tiny blue flowers
And tree trunk that long ago died.

Scavenger Hunt Steps:
1. Read clue
2. Locate element in environment
3. Check map key for image
Additional facts about Childrens’ exposure to nature:

- Children who spend more time in outdoor activities and less time watching TV have better retinal microvascular structure (Gopinath et al).

- Preschool children experiencing a weekly outdoor lesson have improved self-efficacy and early literacy skills. (Trent-Brown et al).

- Individuals in the general population consistently report a sense of rejuvenation after wilderness outings and other exposures to relatively natural environments, and systematically perform better on objective measures of attention after such exposure. This is explained by Attention Restoration Theory (ART). (Faber Taylor, A., Kuo, 2009).

Citations


ITHACA CHILDREN'S GARDEN

BEVERLY J MARTIN ELEMENTARY

SPRING NATURE WALK

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