

About CCFPD

The forest preserves are great places to visit year-round, with loads to see and do in the spring.



Spring Activity Guide



Make more of your spring with CCFPD

- Visit the Mabery Gelvin Botanical Gardens at Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve for the beautiful arrangements of flowers and to see the Koi fish in the newly renovated pond/waterfall.
- Take a bike ride on the Kickapoo Rail Trail.
- Listen to frogs at wetlands throughout the forest preserves.
- Pick up a Spring Wildflower guide for Rayburn Purnell Woods at Lake of the Woods. You can also print one off here: <https://www.ccfpd.org/Museum-Education/Self-Guided-Adventures>



What's Inside

Spring is a wonderful time of the year to go outside to explore all the changes that are taking place and watch everything come to life after the winter.

This booklet is full of ideas and activities to guide you as you explore nature, whether you are at one of the forest preserves or in your own backyard.

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Spring Azure: They spend the winter as a chrysalis and emerge as butterflies in early spring.

They can be found along the edges of forests and will visit flowers in gardens.



Mourning Cloaks: overwinter as butterflies by hibernating under the bark of trees and emerge as soon as the days warm up.

They can be found in forests, prairies and gardens.



Eastern Commas: overwinter as butterflies by hibernating under bark of trees or under shingles. They emerge in early spring.

They can be found in forests near rivers and other water sources.



Question Mark: overwinter as butterflies by hibernating under bark of trees or under shingles. They emerge in early spring.

They can be found in forested areas with some open space.

Butterflies

With spring here, butterflies are starting to re-appear. Some butterflies overwinter as eggs, caterpillars, or pupa, often in leaf litter. Others overwinter as adult butterflies, finding dry areas in building cracks or hollow trees. Some actually migrate to a warmer areas, like the Monarchs.

Here are just a few of the butterflies you can find in early spring. Can you find them all?



Monarch: migrates to Mexico in the winter and comes back north as early as April.

They can be found in prairies and open fields.



Cabbage Whites: overwinter as a chrysalis and emerge as a butterfly in early spring.

They can be found in a variety of habitats including prairies, fields, along roadsides and gardens.



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail: They spend the winter as a chrysalis and will emerge as butterflies in early spring.

They can be found in prairies and home gardens.

Tips for a Great Outdoor Adventure in the Spring

Spring has finally arrived! Here are some tips to help make the most of your outdoor adventure.

1. Plan Ahead. Research where you are heading. For example, if you are going to one of the Champaign County Forest Preserves, visit www.CCFPD.org where you can find trail maps, open hours, attractions and highlights, and driving directions. Also, be sure to check out the weather before heading out to make sure there won't be any storms approaching.
2. Dress Properly. Spring is always an exciting time because short sleeve t-shirts, shorts and sandals make an appearance. However, it's important to always check the weather before you head outside! Dressing in layers is important, that way you can remove some layers if you get warmer. Don't forget to pack the sunscreen! Also, wear shoes you don't mind getting muddy.
3. Respect Nature. Never chase or harass wildlife. This may cause them to use up valuable energy needed for survival. Always leave a natural area in better condition than you found it in. Please don't let trash become litter.
4. Be Persistent. Don't be disappointed if you can't find the animal you were hoping to see. Learn to recognize the signs that animals leave behind, such as tracks, scat, and chewed food, which can give you clues about what animals were there.

Name the Animal Baby

Many animals have their young as the days are getting warmer, and plenty of food is available. Can you match the animal to the name it is called as a baby?

Answers on the bottom of page 5.



Red Fox

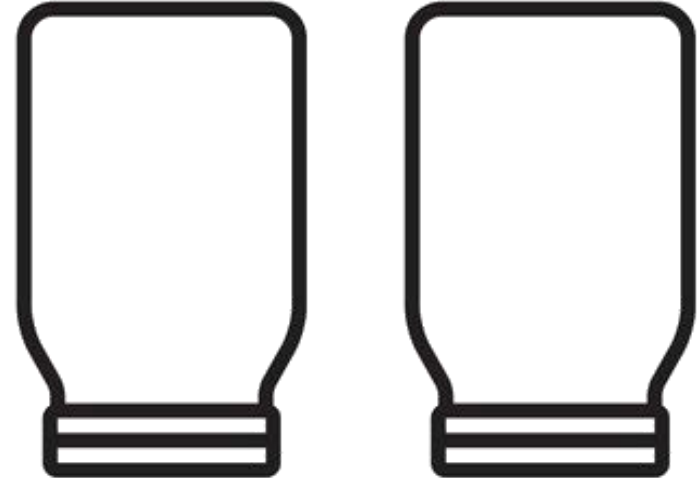


Cottontail Rabbit



Opossum

Draw a picture of your experiment.



What's Happening?

Plants breathe by taking in carbon dioxide and breathing out oxygen. When doing this, the plant also produces water vapor. In this jar, the water vapor is warmed by the sun, then condenses on the cooler glass producing the water droplets. The other jar doesn't have a living plant so water vapor isn't produced.

Catch a Breath

In the spring, plants are starting to grow. They breathe in carbon dioxide and breathe out oxygen. You can see this happening by trying out this experiment.

What you will need:

- A patch of grass or a plant outside in the sun.
- Two glass jars



1. Place a clean, empty glass jar over a patch of grass or a plant that is in the sun.
2. Place the other jar over concrete or asphalt.
3. Leave the jars for an hour and then return to examine them. The inside of the jar over the plant will be coated with droplets of water while the other jar should be mostly dry inside.



Burlington Times News

Coyote



White-tailed Deer



Baby Names

- Kit
- Fawn
- Kitten
- Joey
- Pup

Can you find any of these animals in the forest preserves or in your own backyard?

Red Fox (Kit), Cottontail Rabbit (Kitten), Opossum (Joey), Coyote (Pup), White-tailed Deer (Fawn)

Explore Nature With Your Senses

Spring is here! Every season has its own sights, sounds, and smells. Try out four of your senses outdoors this spring.

Sight



How many different colors of flowers can you find?



Virginia Bluebells



Trillium



Bloodroot

Smell



Do all flowers have a scent?

Does the scent remind you of something?

Does it smell sweet? Stinky? Good? Bad?

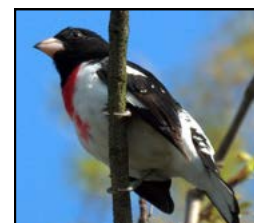
Be careful that you aren't smelling flowers that have visitors like bees.



Scarlet Tanager

They can be found in wooded areas.

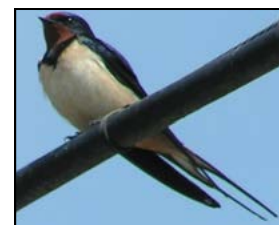
What to listen for: a raspy “cheer-up; cheer-a-lee; cheer-ee-o”



Rose-breasted Grosbeak

They can be found in wooded areas.

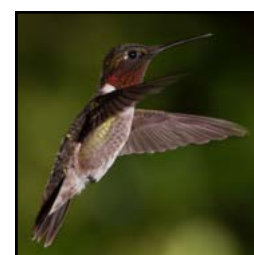
What to listen for: Very close to an American Robin’s song, “cheer-up; cheer-a-lee; cheer-ee-o”.



Barn Swallow

They can be found in open areas near water.

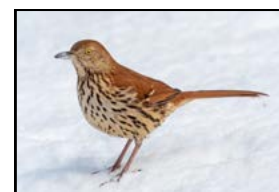
What to listen for: Twittering sound and rapid “tit-tit-tit-tit”.



Ruby-throated Hummingbird

They can be found near forest edges, prairies, and backyards.

What to listen for: Listen for the humming sounds of their wings. Also listen for a “chee-dit” sound when they talk with each other.



Brown Thrasher

They can be found in wooded areas or along the edge of these areas.

What to listen for: They are mimics with over 1,100 songs. One of their calls is “plant a seed, plant a seed”.

Migrating Birds

Birds that migrated to warmer areas for the winter are flying back to their breeding grounds this spring. Some may continue flying past Illinois but make a stopover to rest before continuing on. Have you seen or heard any of these birds?



Eastern Phoebe

They can be found in wooded areas especially near water.

What to listen for: Males sing their name, "fee-beeee"



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

They can be found in wooded areas.

What to listen for: A high pitched, sharp "spee spee".



Indigo Bunting

They can be found along the edges of woods and fields.

What to listen for: They love to sing, and can sing as many as 200 songs per hour! Their song can differ but some phrases they repeat are "what! what! where? where? see it! see it!"



Sandhill Crane

Around 20,000 sandhill cranes migrate through Illinois from mid-February to mid-April. You may see them resting in wetlands.

What to listen for: loud, rattling bugle calls. They can be heard up to 2.5 miles away.



Sound

Listen for frogs calling near a pond or a wetland.



Cricket Frog

Sounds like two marbles clacking together.



Spring Peeper
"peep, peep, peep"



American Bullfrog
"jug-o-rum"

Touch



What does an earthworm feel like?

Cold?

Slimy?

Rough?

Smooth?



Make sure you are gentle and place the worm back where you found it.

Gently rub your hand over grass.

Is it prickly?

Is it soft?

Does it tickle?



Celebrate Earth Day

Be a planet protector; here are some ways to do that!



Go outside and play! Take a hike, play in your backyard or go to your local park. Being outside will help you understand and appreciate the environment.

Using energy wisely is always very important. Save energy by turning off the lights when leaving the room or the house.



Water is usually cleaned before it is piped into your home, and water is often cleaned after it leaves your house. Cleaning water takes energy, chemicals, time and money. One way to conserve water is shutting it off when brushing your teeth.



Learn more about the world. Read books about the earth and visit websites. Share the information you learn with other people.



Did You Know?

Check out these cool facts about plants and animals you can find in our area.

Stinging Nettle



- Nettles have hairs on them that if touched 'stings' the person or animal. This prevents them from getting eaten by animals.
- Even though they 'sting', nettles can be a food source for people.
- Can be found off the trails at all of our forest preserves.



- It is a very secretive bird that camouflages in leaf litter on the forest floor.
- It is a sign that spring is on its way. It migrates back to Illinois starting in March.
- You can look for this bird at all of our forest preserves. The best place to look is open areas (like prairies) right on the edge of forests at dusk.

American Woodcock



Dragonflies



- Dragonflies start out life in the water and look nothing like the adults (nymph stage). They stay active all winter under the water and emerge as adults in the spring.
- Adult dragonflies can eat 30 to 100 mosquitoes a day.
- Find dragonflies near bodies of water and look in water to find the nymphs.