

EARLY CHILDHOOD NEWSLETTER

April, 2020

Outdoor activities



Environment

Connecting with nature

What's in this Issue?

Create a Sit Spot in your backyard

Create a veggie garden

Go on a backyard bug hunt or treasure hunt

FUN online activities!

Atlas of Living Australia - Discover Flora and Fauna in your area

Digivol - Access Citizen Science projects

Birds in Backyards bird finder

Bushcare Blue Mountains Resources

Australian Museum Factsheets

Taronga TV

Australian Reptile Park livestream

ABC Education and ABC Podcasts for all ages

And some boredom busters..

Get in touch at gfitzgerald@bmcc.nsw.gov.au & ekennedy@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Create a SIT SPOT in your backyard or on your balcony

Slowing down and connecting with nature is as important to our well being as food and sleep. A sit spot (or secret spot) is simply a favourite place in nature that you visit regularly to cultivate awareness as you expand your senses, feed your brain and study patterns of local plants, birds, trees, animals, bugs, ants, etc.

It is as simple as:

1. Go outside
2. Find a place nearby to sit quietly
3. Practice observing nature and opening your senses
4. Repeat as often as you can



Where? Find a place that calls to you, a comfortable place nearby where you can sit comfortably and quietly observe your surroundings. This is a technology-free activity. Leave your phone inside and make it a solitary activity if possible. If not, try and find a place where you can't see other people as this may be distracting. Your sit spot needs to be safe. Keep your eyes open for hazards such as bees, snakes or spiders or dead hanging branches. If you feel so comfortable that you fall asleep, that's okay too!

When? Sunrise and sunset are magical times for bird activity and you may even get a bonus natural lightshow. You could do your sit spot at the same time everyday and you may find you have regular visitors to your garden, or you could try different times of the day and find other birds or creatures may visit at different times. Long term, you could watch how the seasons change your garden.

How long? Aim for 15-30 minutes. Children may need to start with 5 minutes but if you can manage a longer session you will have a much more worthwhile experience. When you sit down in nature you create a ripple effect around you, much like when you throw a pebble into a pond. It takes time for the birdlife and other creatures to accept your presence and settle back into their usual activity, giving you the ability to really notice what is going on around you. Be curious. Be in the moment. This is your time to connect with nature. Give thanks if you feel gratitude.

**If you would like to sketch or write in a journal, go for it.
Be inspired by your sit spot.**

Do you have space for a garden or some pots? Make a small home garden!

Living in the Blue Mountains we are in the **cool zone** and these vegetables and herbs can be planted right now.

Directly into the ground:

Broad beans
Garlic
Lettuce and salad greens
Peas
Radish
Spinach
Swedes and Turnips
Coriander



Punnets:

Broccoli
Cauliflower
Garlic
Kale
Lettuce
Salad green
Onions
Spring onion
Chives
Sage
Thyme



Sowing tips:

When sowing directly, the soil must be well prepared

- Dig the soil over and break up any clumps, then rake the surface.
- Sow seed twice as deep as the width of the seed.
- Water the seeds gently.
- Once the seeds have germinated, feed with a weak liquid fertiliser.

Go on a bug hunt!

After learning about me, please take me back to my home

Beginner's Blue Mountains Bugs

The Blue Mountains are full of amazing bugs. How many different kinds can you find?

Butterfly

Millepede

Beetle

Bug

Beetle

Centipede

Fly

Praying Mantis

Spider

Dragonfly

Lacewing

Cicada

Wasp

Ant

Bee

Moth

Grasshopper

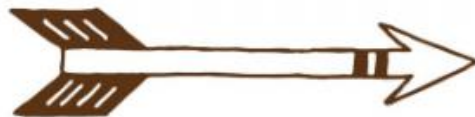
Cockroach

Fly

www.shutterstock.com

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE HUNT

- { } Something colorful.
- { } A pinecone.
- { } An acorn.
- { } Something smooth.
- { } Something rough.
- { } Two kinds of leaves.
- { } Two kinds of sticks.
- { } Something bumpy.
- { } A flat rock.
- { } Something fuzzy.
- { } Something pretty.
- { } A chewed leaf.
- { } A flower or petal.
- { } A piece of litter.
- { } Something you think is
a treasure.



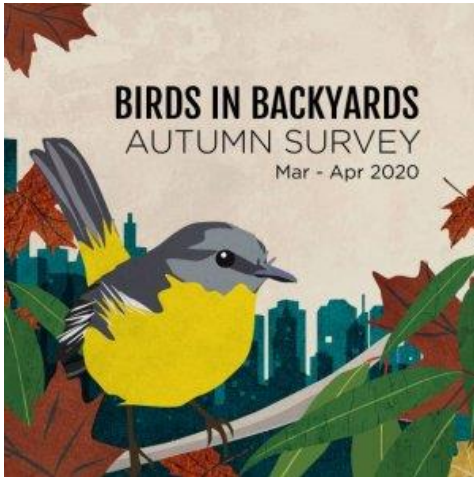
FUN online activities

[Atlas of Living Australia for Schools and the community](#) Online activities for families to discover fauna and flora species in your area.

[Explore your area](#) Enter a street address, GPS coordinates, postcode or place name to find out what species live near you.

[Australian iconic species](#) Browse Australia's most recognisable species.

[Education resources](#) Access F-12 curriculum-aligned classroom activities, set-by-step user guides and case studies.



[Bird Finder](#)

With COVID-19 meaning we are all spending almost, if not, all of our time at home, it is the perfect opportunity to become acquainted with your birdy neighbours. Birds in Backyards surveys can be submitted at any time, and as often as you like. Your data tells us how our urban birds are doing and how our gardens, and our own behaviour in those gardens can impact on the birds visiting

[Birds in Backyards Kids Activities](#)

Hello parents, carers and kids! Are you looking for at-home activities to keep everyone chirpy? Here at BirdLife we have lots of resources that are fun AND you can learn about amazing birds and places.

[Bushcare Blue Mountains resources](#)



[Australian Museum Factsheets](#)

Spiders, Mammals, Frogs, Fishes, Birds, Insects, Reptiles, Worms, Jellyfish, anenomes and coral, Sea squirts and sea tulips, Molluscs, Sea stars and urchins, Plankton, Crustaceans, Centipedes and millipedes, Wildlife of Sydney, Sydney sea stars, Australian bats, Australia's extinct animals and Dangerous animals. **Check the website for much more information!**



[Citizen Science Projects](#)

[FrogID](#)

[Fishes](#)

[Cockatoo](#)

[Hollow as Homes](#)

[Capturing Climate Change](#)

[Taronga TV](#) Over the coming weeks Taronga will be bringing its two beautiful zoos directly into your living room.

Tiger Cam, Seal Cam, Elephant Cam, Keeper Chats

[Australian Reptile Park Livestream on Youtube](#) Daily 10am - Animal tales with Tim Faulkner

Commencing on Monday 6th April, tune in for another week of both fun and exciting action this week as we kick off even MORE live streams and educational videos! Here's when to catch the action!

The educational videos at 10am will be posted on Tim Faulkner's Facebook and Instagram pages as well as the Australian Reptile Park's YouTube channel.

The live streams at 2pm will be available on the Australian Reptile Park's Facebook and Instagram.

ABC Education Loads of online resources across all subjects for all ages

Some examples are:

Create a mini greenhouse Creating a "microclimate" is a great way to protect fruit and veggie seedlings from the cold. Tino Carnevale shows you a cheap, portable way to create a mini greenhouse from a plastic container, and he decides to use it to protect his new tomato, eggplant and okra seedlings. Why might these three plants need a greenhouse more than others? What other plants might need a greenhouse to help them grow?

5 ways to inspire kids to read for fun These days it seems like children prefer to sit in front of screens rather than engage with old-fashioned print. Here are a few easy and effective ways you can encourage kids to pick up a book and read.

ABC Podcasts

Kids and Family Science

Some examples:

Noisy by Nature ABC KIDS listen is launching a new nature show in time for biodiversity month. Dr Ann Jones from the ABC's nature podcast, **Off Track** will present **Noisy by Nature**, which takes kids on adventures in the great outdoors to experience the funniest, weirdest noises in Australian nature.

Animal Sound Safari Animal Sound Safari takes your ears around the world to explore the weird and wacky histories we humans have with animals.

Little Yarns Australia is full of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations. From Bunuba to Wiradjuri, Mabuig to palawa, every mob has its own language and unique culture. Each episode of Little Yarns will take you on a journey to a different nation to learn a first word on Country.

Soundwalks Let's go for a soundwalk together as we help you wind down and relax. Let your ears take you on a wonderful journey across Australia. Listen, imagine and see with your mind's eye. The sounds tell a story ...

Fierce Girls From athletes to aviators, scientists to spies. From the deep blue sea to the dark, black skies. Australia is full of girls who dare to do things differently. Adventurous girls. Girls with guts and spirit. You know what they are? They're FIERCE. And these are their stories.

Imagine This Imagine a world where it's alright to ask questions and have your voice heard. Each episode we delve into a puzzling question from an inquisitive mind, examining the science behind it in a fun and engaging way. This podcast is suited to kids aged 4 and up.

You're not STILL bored are you??

[Citizen Science games you can play and contribute to the greater good!](#)

[Melbourne Symphony Orchestra](#) Online Concert Series Thursday Nights @ 7:30pm

[Opera House Livestream](#) From our House to yours. Series of talks, concerts, events.

[NASA Langley Research Centre](#) Virtual Tour

[Smithsonian Natural History Museum](#) Virtual Tour

Take care everyone.

We'd love to see what you DO, CREATE, EXPLORE!

Send photos to our Connect with Nature team at:

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