

Nature Journaling

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Sometimes it is the neatest little finds, while out on a trail, in your backyard, along a creek's edge, that spark questions and curiosity.

Sometimes you forget how magical and wonderful nature is until you find that something that makes you stop and wonder and think and admire.

There were a couple of neat nature moments that I had this summer that led me back to nature journaling. For me, journaling, in nature especially, allows me to unwind and relax, calm and center myself. It allows me to slow down and take it all in.

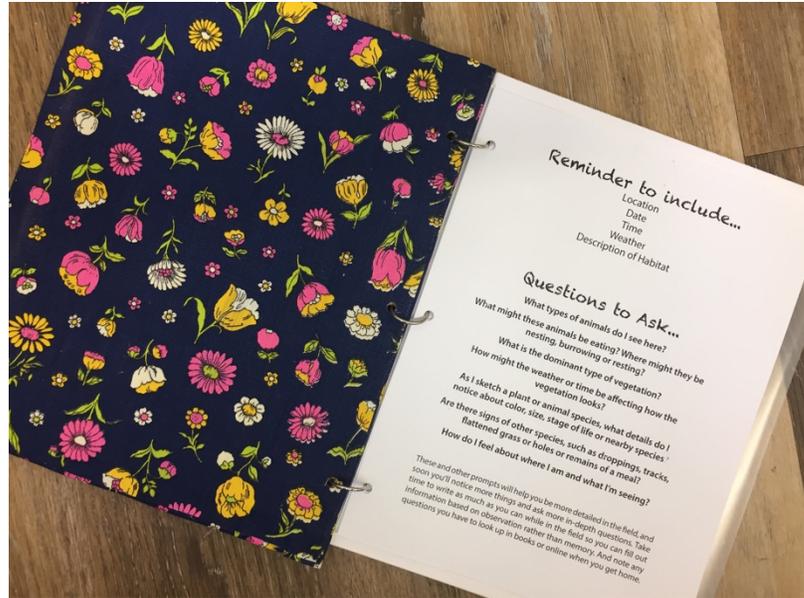
I am a nature nut through and through. I get to be out in nature for my job as well as where I live and as a choice location for weekend excursions ...sometimes though, you are so immersed in it that you forget to stop and just take in those small, special moments as they present themselves. I have to say my kids are great for making me realize this too - my 5-year-old daughter stops constantly to admire and ask questions and my almost 2-year-old son is on bug patrol right now so you know there is a bug in the vicinity as he shouts "bug" at the top of his lungs and points with vigor.

Nature journaling is something that I have not done for years because, well, life gets busy and sometimes it's challenging to find the time. Which is silly. We should all make time for those small things we enjoy that make us feel good. Sometimes you just forget how much fun certain things are until you stumble upon them again and realize they are worth the effort.

One of the moments that sparked this return to journaling was a spectacular hike through an old growth cedar forest. It has been years since I immersed myself in such a place and it was magical. The sheer size and beauty of these trees made me feel small and grateful in such a wonderful way. I wanted to stop more than I did, I wanted to just sit and breathe it all in, see what might have appeared as I lingered. Alas my children's joy and excitement was so high that we enjoyed this special place in a different and wonderful way that day.

Instead of buying a blank book from the store, I created my own journal – I put together a collection of paper types, sleeves and pockets, inspirational quotes...I crafted a sturdy cover, fastened it with rings so that I could add and take away as needed. I have to say that it was very satisfying to put this together and it is something that I can build onto in the years to come.

Now I just have to make the time to go linger...usually I'm on a mission to hike a trail, see a viewpoint, get back home for a commitment...I kind of feel that this new journaling interest is the extra incentive that I needed to take some time and slow down, write and draw, question and ponder, relax...might have to leave the kids at home at this point until they are old enough to join me in a few minutes of silence lol. One day. Me time is good too. We all need that.



A peek at the Nature Journal that I created...

I can't draw well. My writing/rambling is reasonable and my poetry skills are...progressing. I have to remember to not be critical with journaling as I think it takes the fun out of it – as being overly critical does with most things...Sure that bird I just drew didn't quite look like what I saw but I got the main features, I sketched, I described, I listened, I recorded, I enjoyed doing it!

I am no journaling expert! I read books, I google for inspiration, I collect thoughts and ideas on what other people do and then create my own process. There are no right or wrong ways to journal. It's up to you. I find that having great pens, pencils, coloured pencils, even paints can make all the difference to me on how things feel and look. Having tools that inspire you and assist you to do your best are key.

Maybe you want to take a stab at it too?

PS – The Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area is a great destination for nature journaling! Feel free to pop into the Discovery Centre located in the parking lot of the old Wildlife Centre. We have maps, displays and information to share and are open until the thanksgiving weekend.

Look us up and/or get in touch!

www.discovery-centre.ca

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