

Daisy - Eco Learner

Don't you love the feel of the warm sun on your face? The sweet smell of a flower? The sounds of birds singing? Or the fun of walking on a trail? Nature gives you many gifts! Now learn some ways you can give back by protecting nature.

Materials:

- Internet
- Wildlife game chart
- What does not belong sheet

Steps:

1. Be prepared to protect nature before you go outdoors
2. Keep living things safe when you walk in nature
3. Learn how to protect nature from trash

Purpose: When I've earned this badge, I'll have learned three ways to protect the environment when I go outdoors.

What is nature? When you walk outdoors, nature is the world around you! It's the plants, animals, insects, mountains, deserts, ocean, stars, trees, clouds, and everything else not made by people. Let's draw the things in nature you love the most! Here is a [website](#) that will show you different things to draw!

Step 1: Be prepared to protect nature before you go outdoors

Girl Scouts know it's important to be prepared! When you go outdoors, take water and maybe a snack. Wear sunscreen and dress in layers. Find out what kind of plants and wildlife you may see and how to treat them. Be prepared to not only keep yourself safe, but keep nature safe, too!

Leave no trace

- Seven principles to help us keep nature safe:
 - Know before you go
 - Choose the right path
 - Trash your trash
 - Leave what you find
 - Be careful with fire
 - Respect wildlife
 - Be kind to other visitors
- Talk about the list with an adult. What do you think each one means? [Watch](#) an expert talk about the principles more in depth.

Be prepared checklist

It's important to be prepared when you go outdoors. Take a look at this list to make sure you have everything you need before going outside.

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- I have water and a snack.
- I am wearing the right clothes for the weather.
- I know what kinds of plants and wildlife I might see.

Choices – do one:

- Have a “be prepared” show-and-tell.** When you go outside, there are some things you will want to bring, and some you’ll want to leave at home. Gather items from around your house and make two piles. One is for “take outdoors” and one is for “leave behind”. Think of things like a toaster or a toy (leave behind) and water bottle, sunscreen, and bug spray (take outdoors). Then show an adult your two piles and have them guess what each is for. You could also make flashcards with a hand-drawn picture of an item and on the back write either “leave behind” or “take outdoors.”

~OR~

- Play a wildlife game with your friends or family.** In some of the squares on the Wildlife game chart, draw some animals you are likely to see in your backyard and some animals you aren’t likely to see. Play a game with your family by crossing out which animals you won’t see and circling the animals you would see. Make it more fun by drawing all animals you could see in your yard and playing bingo outside and marking off the animals you can find!

Step 2: Keep living things safe when you walk in nature

When you walk on a trail, stay on the path. This simple rule is important because when you walk off the path, you might trample plants, flowers, insects, and other living things.

Choices – do one:

- Watch your step.** Go outdoors with an adult and walk along a dirt path. See what kinds of prints you make as you walk. What was on the path? Were there any plants, flowers, or insects? Why do you think it’s important to stay on the path?

~OR~

- Make a nature circle.** On a trail or sidewalk, lay a circle of string at least three feet long next to the walk or path. Look in the circle and count how many things you find that live there, like plants or bugs. What would be injured if you walked off a path? For extra fun, enjoy this [video](#) showing different animals crossing this log “path” when no one is around.

Step 3: Learn how to protect nature from trash

When you toss a snack wrapper on a trail, how long do you think it will last out there? If you guessed hundreds of years, you are right! Not only is trash a mess, it’s also dangerous for plants and animals outdoors. Trash may damage plants and soil and cause health problems for creatures that eat it. Find out how you can make a difference.

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Where does our trash go after we throw it away? Even if we put it in a can and it goes to a landfill, it has the potential go into a water system and into the ocean. Watch this [video](#) to learn about the great Pacific garbage patch. It's important to know what problems there are so that we can move towards fixing them!

Choices – do one:

- Play “what does not belong.”** Look at the drawing and put an ‘X’ through the things that do not belong in nature. Why don’t they belong? What would you do if you saw these things on a trail? Draw your own “what does not belong” picture and have your family guess what does not belong. Do you know how long it take for different pieces of trash to decompose (go away)? Take a look at [this](#) and see if you are surprised at the amount of time these items take to disappear.

~OR~

- Create a trash tale.** Come up with a story that tells why it's important to not leave trash in nature. Share your story with your friends and family. It could be a story about how a bear found food trash at a campsite and ate all of it or about a flower that was surrounded by trash and couldn't grow. If you want, you can draw pictures for your story. If you want, share your story with Jory at jsejdiu@girlscoutsindiana.org!

Now that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:

- Teaching my friends and family how to care for nature outdoors.