



Enjoy

# Nature Near You In Winter

Getting your family in touch with **NATURE** is as simple as walking outside. Have fun and learn together outdoors with these simple activities you can do in your backyard... and beyond!

## BIRD COOKIES

Here's an easy recipe that chickadees, titmice and nuthatches love. Mix  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup flour,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water, 3 tbsp. corn syrup and 1 package of plain, clear gelatin. Add enough birdseed to make a thick dough. You can also add raisins, nuts or dried fruit chunks. Roll the mixture out on wax paper and cut out shapes with cookie cutters. Use a straw to poke a hole near the top of the shape. Let the cookies dry for 8 hours, turn them over, and let them dry for another 8 hours. When they are completely dry, tie a loop of string through the hole. Hang the cookies from trees, bushes, or eaves, and watch the acrobatic little birds tear them apart!

## FEEDER WATCHING

Feeding birds is an inexpensive way to bring nature near you. You don't need a special feeder to attract birds. Just spreading bird seed on the ground will bring doves, sparrows and juncos, which prefer to feed on the ground. If you live in an apartment, find out if you can hang a feeder from the eaves outside a window, or get a small feeder that attaches to the window with suction cups. Visit this Web site to learn about different kinds of feeders and other tips for feeding birds: [http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/AboutBirdsandFeeding/abtbirds\\_index.html](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/AboutBirdsandFeeding/abtbirds_index.html).

Use a field guide to try and identify the birds that come to your feeder. Check out several from the library, so you can decide which you like best before you buy one. There are some computer sites that can help you identify birds, but a field guide is better, because you can also take it with you on trips outdoors.

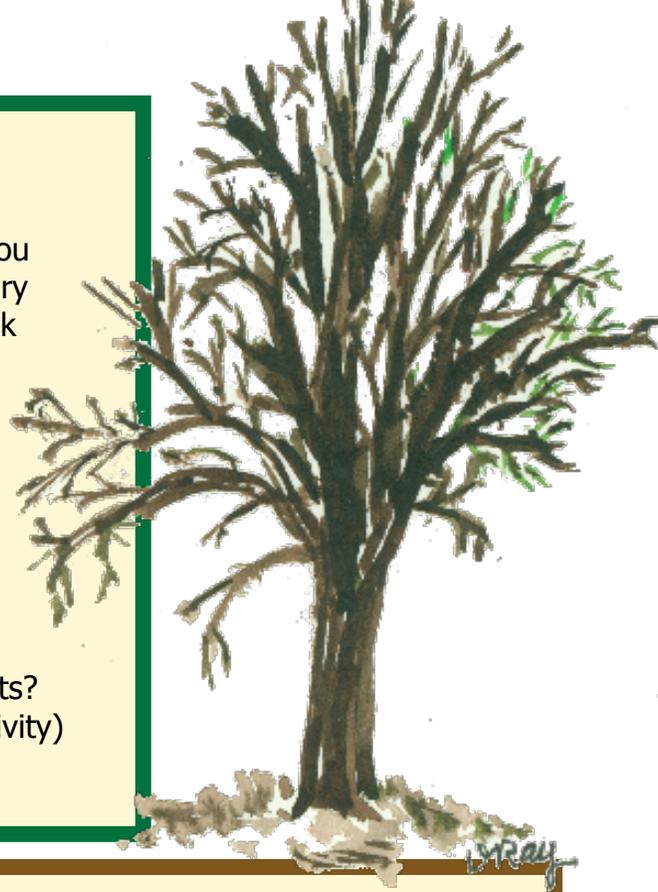


D. Ray

## FAMILY TREE

Choose one tree in your yard to be your "family" tree. If you don't have any trees, choose a tree at a park, school, library or other place you visit often. Make a family tree scrapbook to record the things you do and learn as you get to know your tree this year.

- ❁ Draw or take a picture of your tree in winter. What changes have you noticed that prepared your tree for winter?
- ❁ Feel the bark of your tree. Is it rough or smooth? Does it have ridges, lines, criss-cross patterns or warts? What color is it? Make a rubbing of the bark (see activity) to include in your scrapbook.

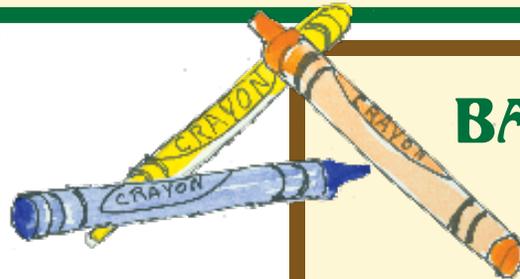
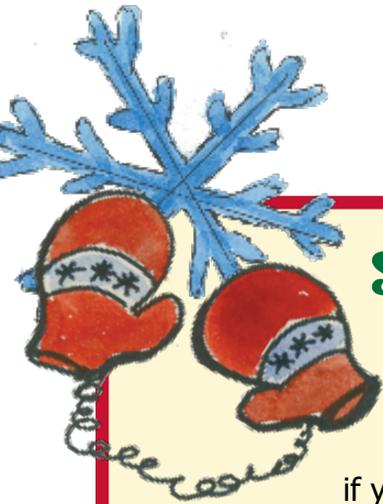


## BARK RUBBINGS

You don't have to be a great artist to make cool pictures of tree bark. You'll need paper and a crayon with its wrapper removed. Hold the paper against the bark of a tree, and rub the side of the crayon over the paper. Make bark pictures of different trees in your yard, neighborhood or park. Mix them up and see if you can match the picture to the tree it came from. Can you guess how the bark feels by looking at the picture?

## STAYING SAFE

Cold weather doesn't have to keep you inside, if you know how to beat the cold. Dress in layers, using fabrics that dry quickly or that can keep you warm even if they get wet. Cotton is not a good choice for cold weather, as it gets wet easily and will make you feel even colder. The layer closest to your skin should be one that dries fast, such as wicking polyester. Wool and synthetic fleece make good middle layers. The outer layer can be a fabric like nylon, which blocks wind and water. A hat helps to hold in a great deal of body heat. Mittens are warmer than gloves in very cold weather. Your feet will stay warm and dry with two pairs of socks (remember, no cotton), worn thick over thin, and waterproof or water-resistant boots.



RAY



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