

Naturally Wild Families



Check out this Springtime Scavenger Hunt! Bring this list with you to the Houston Arboretum & Nature Center or use it in your neighborhood.

Most scavenger hunts ask you to find something and bring it back. This scavenger hunt is different as it asks you and your family to find things that can't necessarily be brought back. A sound, a sight, an experience, these are the things that you'll be hunting for.

Along the way, look around to notice wildlife, observe with all your senses, have fun, but please stay on the trails and "Leave No Trace".

1. Wildflowers are starting to bloom! Studying them without picking helps provide seeds for next year's flowers. Find 5 different flower shapes and sketch them to notice even the smallest differences.
2. With warmer spring temperatures, reptiles and amphibians are more active. How many of these cold-blooded creatures can you spot basking on tree branches, fences, or in the water?
3. Monarch butterflies are famous for their long-distance migration to Mexico every winter, but Houston is home to over 100 butterfly species! Can you spot one of these beautiful creatures fluttering amongst the wildflowers?
4. Not all the living creatures in the flowers and grasses are as gentle and sweet as the butterfly. Predators stalk the tall stems in search of their next meal. Are you able to find a spider, praying mantis, or other cute carnivore?
5. Many small mammals, like mice and shrews, carefully live their lives in the dense growth of the prairie, savanna, and other grassy areas. They chew tiny trails between the plants to escape the watchful eyes of raptors. Get down and look low, can you see any of these tunnels?
6. Blue skies can only be made better with white fluffy clouds. As the wind blows, these big clumps of water droplets start to take on weird shapes! A pig? A boat? A flock of sheep? What do the clouds above you today resemble?
7. AaaaaaCHOO! All this pollen in the air is causing a lot of allergies, but is super important for plants to make their fruits and seeds. Look – from a distance – for special buzzing insects that

help move pollen from flower to flower. See the yellow pollen stuck on their legs? Count how many pollinators visit 1 plant in 2 minutes.

8. Have you ever been told to “stop and smell the roses”? Luckily, they smell really lovely, but not all flowers have a sweet smell. Start sniffing and see if you can find one that makes you wrinkle your nose.
9. Holey Moly - imagine if your bedroom was underground! Lots of creatures live in the soil beneath our feet. Armadillos, toads, crawfish, and moles are just a few that dig burrows for a home. Have you noticed any holes in the ground where animals may live?
10. Spring is the season when birds start trying to find a mate. Usually it’s the male bird you hear singing to establish territory or entice a female. How many different bird calls can you hear?
11. Once a mate has been found, it’s time to build a nest for fragile eggs and baby birds. Are there any nests in the tree branches above your head?
12. April Showers Bring May Flowers, or so the saying goes, but what’s really exciting are all the animal tracks you can find in the mud! Can you find any clues left behind by wild animal feet?
13. Leaves are the food factories of plants. This is where they take in gases from the air and use the sun’s energy to create the food they need to grow. Leaves are not all the same, though. Can you find 5 differences between leaves you see?
14. Nature is full of fast-moving creatures like the dragonfly, hawks, snakes, and even silly squirrels, but not every animal is built for speed. Find the slowest moving creature you can, what is it? How far does it travel in 2 minutes?
15. Unfortunately, pieces of trash often fall out of pockets, bags, and strollers as other naturally wild folks are enjoying time outdoors. Pick up any litter you see unless it is broken glass.
16. Ouch! That plant got me! One popular fruit, the blackberry, grows on very thorny vines and is very common in Houston. This time of year, the white flowers can be found brightening the forest floor. Can you find any blackberry vines?

17. Recycling Day is every day in nature. Fungi are one type of decomposer that help take nutrients from dead logs or trees and recycle them back into the soil. Shelf fungi are named for the way they stick out from the dead wood. Can you find a fallen tree with fungi growing on it?

18. Shhhh ... what's that sound? Listen for the sound of wind in the trees. What does it sound like to you?

19. Nature inspires the artist in us all. Can you write a poem about something you saw today?

20. I hope you enjoyed your wild time in nature today and saw lots of neat things. What is 1 new thing you saw or discovered today?