

HUMBER ARBORETUM ECO CENTRE

ANIMAL TRACKS & SIGNS

INTERESTING FACTS

- ✧ Cottontail rabbits will eat their own scat! Sounds disgusting but it's not. Due to their diet consisting of woody stems and bark, their scat is basically small clumps of sawdust. So as a survival technique they re-eat their scat to ensure they receive all of the nutrients they missed the first time.
- ✧ In the fall, male white tail deer can be found "rubbing" their antlers and forehead against the trunks of trees causing a lot of damage to the bark. By doing this they leave their scent to warn other male deer in the area to stay away.
- ✧ Contrary to popular belief the beaver does not actually eat wood, instead they feed on the bark of trees. Chewing into wood is how the beaver keeps his ever growing sharp front teeth in check.



COOL ACTIVITIES



MATCH THE TRACK

- ✧ Print off some pictures of animals that you would find at the Humber Arboretum (real pictures are best) then print some pictures of tracks that go along with the animal. Split the class in half and have them try and match the track with the animal.

WALK LIKE ME

- ✧ Describe and demonstrate the different ways animals walk to your class (to be done while crawling). Get them to practice each walk then have fun calling out the different walks eliminating those who do the wrong walk or do the walk wrong.
DIAGONAL WALKERS: Front right foot moves forward the same time as the rear left foot moves forward and vice versa.
GALLOPERS: Push off with their back feet hit the ground with their front feet, then bring back feet to rest in front of the front feet. (This is a tough one)
BOUNDERS: Walk by reaching forward with the front feet then bring the back feet up just where the front feet landed.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the name of the shrub with the red coloured bark that you can find both rabbit and deer browse on during the winter months? (ANS: Red Osier Dogwood; During the winter you can see deer browse near the top and rabbit browse on the lower branches.)


2. By studying the scat of different animals what are scientists able to discover? (ANS: They are able to discover which animal it is, if the animal is a herbivore, omnivore, or carnivore and the specific foods the animal is eating.)
3. What animal in the arboretum makes a track that looks like someone has been cross country skiing? (ANS: The white tailed deer drags the tip of it's hooves through the snow making it easier for the deer travelling behind to walk through the snow.)

