

HUMBER ARBORETUM ECO CENTRE



NATURE WALK



INTERESTING FACTS

- ✦ There are many plants that live in the Humber Arboretum. It is easy to see the variety of trees and small plants as you walk along the trails. Wildflowers in the forest are best seen in the early spring before the leaves come out on the trees. In late spring, summer and fall there are many beautiful wildflowers in the sunny areas near the river and in the meadow.
- ✦ When going for a walk in the Arboretum, it is not as easy to see the animals in the forest. They are wild animals which are shy and very good at hiding from potential danger. Even though you may not see many animals as you walk along, there are white-tailed deer, cottontail rabbits, squirrels, and raccoons.
- ✦ Did you know that squirrels use their tails for many purposes? When climbing and jumping along branches, the tail is used to help keep its balance. During cold weather, the tail is wrapped around the squirrel's face like a blanket to keep its nose and ears warm while sleeping in a hollow in a tree. During rainy or sunny periods, the tail can be held above the squirrel's back as an umbrella for shelter or shade.

COOL ACTIVITIES

Take A Closer Look at Your Schoolyard

Although the grass on the schoolyard is cut regularly, there are no herbicides and pesticides used on the field. This provides a healthier environment for children to play and it also means that different types of plants, commonly referred to as weeds, are able to colonize the yard besides the grass. This provides an opportunity to do an activity relating to Spatial Sense in Mathematics.

Have the children gather out in the field. Locate a particular type of plant common to the area. You don't have to know the name because the children will only be concentrating on the shape and arrangement of the leaves and whether or not there are flowers (shape sorting). Explain to the children what are the boundaries of their study area and instruct them to walk around in the area and find another plant that has the same shape and arrangement of leaves. Explain that they should stand beside their chosen plant and be prepared to identify what is the same and different about their plant. (size, number of leaves) They can work individually or in pairs.



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the name of the river that flows through the Humber Arboretum? (ANS: It is the West Branch of the Humber River. This river joins the main Humber River and flows to Lake Ontario.)
2. What is an Arboretum? (ANS: We like to think of the Arboretum as a "tree zoo". It is a place where different varieties of trees grow. Some are found growing here naturally and some have been planted here. It is a place where people can walk and learn the names of the different trees because there are signs on the trees identifying the type of tree.)
3. What does camouflage mean? What characteristics do animals have that allow them to camouflage in their surroundings? (ANS: To camouflage is to blend in with the surroundings or to disappear into the background. In order to camouflage well, the fur or feathers of the animal should be similar to the background colours and the animal should have the ability to remain perfectly still.)