



Connecting Kids with Nature: Recommended Books

A selection of some of our favorite books for kids & parents

Click on book title or book image to view price and ordering details!

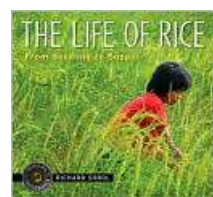
FOR KIDS:



Tracks, Scats, & Signs. *Leslie Dendy (author) & Linda Garrow (illustrator).* Don't let the slim size and child-friendly illustrations fool you – this book is well packed with information to help families get even more out of nature walks. When you don't see the animals, look for their tracks, their scat (poop), and other signs that they have been near. Great way to deepen interest and focus. Includes interesting facts about the behaviors of each of wild animal listed. **Grades preschool – 5.**



How the World Works. *Christian Dorion (author) and Beverly Young (illustrator).* Our Earth is a complex place full of amazing and often baffling systems and processes. This interactive book allows kids to explore such questions as why it rains, why the sea moves in currents, what is a food chain, and how do plants live. Unlike most books on this subject this one doesn't merely state facts, it engages kids through sophisticated, pull tabs, pop ups, flaps and more that turn reading it into an adventure. Huge hit with all the kids with whom we've shared this innovative earth science book. **Grades 3-5.**



The Life of Rice. *Richard Sobol.* Many children today have no understanding where food comes from. Some will say "grocery store" and others "farm." But very few children have any idea what goes into actually producing the food that ends up on their dinner table. Meanwhile food, like air and water, is a basic aspect of nature that binds us very closely to the well being of the Earth. In fact, archaeologists say that many great civilizations collapsed when their farmers could no longer produce enough food for themselves and food for their cities because of population growth, climate change, or unsustainable land use practices. This book helps kids understand our dependence on the cycles of nature, on the health and fertility of the land and water, and on the hard work of ourselves and others. Photographed in Thailand this book is also a lush window into the Thai countryside. **Grades 2-6.**



The Lorax. *Dr. Seuss* Although told in Dr. Seuss' charming style The Lorax delivers a sincere message about the need for sustainable land use. Through story it illustrates the importance of wise stewardship of our natural resources, compassion for the other creatures who depend on them, and the intrinsic value of controlling our urge toward rampant consumerism. In the end a child is given the chance to replant the near extinct Truffula Trees and renew the land. **Grades preschool – 3.**



Stellaluna. *Janell Cannon*. Told from the point of view of a charming and vulnerable little bat named Stellaluna, this classic book invites children to open their hearts and overcome the fear and distaste that many harbor toward bats. The wacky antics of Stellaluna, a little fruit bat separated from her mother, and the baby birds whose nest she comes to share always provoke smiles and giggles. The differences and similarities between the two species are cleverly explored as they all learn to take wing and fly in their own special way. Children on evening walks may view bats in a much more positive way after reading the story of Stellaluna. Also available in “big book” classroom edition. **Grades preschool – 2.**



Raccoon Moon. *Nancy Carol Willis*. Many fascinating details about the lives of raccoons are revealed in this story that follows a mother raccoon and her kits through the season of the kits first year of life. Accurate and compassionate the book builds deep understanding about a wild animal that is familiar to many children in both the countryside and suburbs. **Grades k-3.**

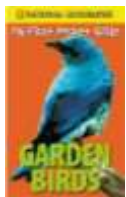


The Secret Garden. *Frances Hodgson Burnett (author). Inga Moore (illustrator)*. Inga Moore’s illustrations breathe new life into this timeless classic. Although Burnett’s tale was first published in 1911, it remains profoundly relevant and moving. It shows in story form what modern science is now proving through countless studies: the many benefits of connecting kids with nature. Through exploring nature, discovering wildlife, gardening, working together, and spending long hours in unstructured outdoor play, three children build self esteem, social skills, physical fitness, knowledge & ingenuity, and a broad spectrum of well-being. A great read-it-together chapter book. **Grades 3–6.**



John Muir: My Life with Nature *Joseph Cornell*. A beautiful and engaging telling of John Muir’s life, beginning with his childhood emigration to America to live and work in the frontier lands. In John Muir we meet a scientist-adventurer whose courage, humility, intelligence, and love of nature won many to the cause of the early environmental movement. He is best remembered for founding the Sierra Club and spearheading the cause to turn Yosemite into a national park. Cornell’s noble purpose is to connect kids with a real hero and role model, in contrast to the self-indulgent pop stars and reality show denizens that so many young people idolize.

Grades preschool – 4.

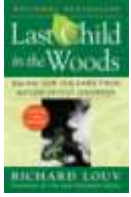


My First Pocket Guide: Garden Birds *National Geographic*. There are many birding books out there but this is the one we love most for kids and family nature walks. Just the right size and shape to fit in a pocket or front pouch of a backpack, this little book also has the perfect layout to help kids find and identify the common birds encountered on a walk. Great photos for visual identification plus info on range

My First Pocket Guide: Reptiles & Amphibians *National Geographic*. Just like the bird identification book above, this great little handbook assists with identifying popular and often seen residents along the trail: lizards, frogs and other amphibians. And as with birds kids of a certain age become



FOR PARENTS & TEACHERS:



[Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder](#) *Richard Louv.* This is the seminal work that launched the grass roots movement to reconnect children and nature. Breathtaking in scope and in the sheer quantity and quality of the scientific evidence cited. Strongly recommended for any Earth's Kids KIDS CLUB Family Nature Walk group leader or for teachers and others seeking to bring nature back into the school or preschool experience!



[Sharing Nature with Children](#) *Joseph Cornell.* As Joseph Cornell's classic book reached its 20th anniversary, Cornell drew upon a wealth of experience in nature education to significantly revise and expand his book. New nature games—favorites from the field - and Cornell's typically insightful commentary makes the second edition of this special classic even more valuable to nature lovers world-wide. The Sharing Nature movement that Cornell pioneered has now expanded to countries all over the globe. Recommended by Boy Scouts of America, American Camping Association, National Audubon Society and many others.



[Sharing Nature with Children II](#) *Joseph Cornell.* A wonderful explanation and exploration of his “Flow Learning” concept. Flow learning recognizes the challenge of getting kids and teens to settle down, settle in, and achieve the engaged and attentive focus that helps kids really see what is around them, work well with others, and build connections between concepts and the real world in which they are immersed. It also allows a deep-feeling connection with the natural world, what the great naturalist John Muir often described as the most profound spiritual experience. We can't emphasize enough how valuable this book is to anyone seeking to lead children on nature walks in the group setting. Includes activity ideas.

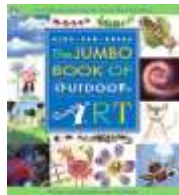


[101 Nature Activities for Kids](#) *Jane Sanborn. Elizabeth Rundle.* 101 Nature Activities for Kids is a one-stop shop for anyone who is seeking a perfect and memorable nature activity for their group. The authors generously share their unparalleled depth and breadth of experience in nature education and in helping others learn while having fun. The book provides practical, field-tested, hands-on activities and challenges that are designed to be used in any outdoor location from Maine to California, and most of them are appropriate for a backyard or city park, as well as for the forest, a meadow, or the beach. In general, the activities do not need a lot of equipment or much preparation time.



[Nature's Playground: Activities, Crafts, and Games to Encourage Children to Get Outdoors](#) *Fiona Danks and Jo Schofield.* Introducing children to the excitement of the natural world, this guide to outdoor adventure provides hours of creative, safe, and fun activities. Children will learn how to build a den from branches, make twig boats to sail across a pond, and voyage through the backyard to find tiny insects and creatures. Activities include invigorating games, natural crafts, and lively adventures, all of which are organized by season. An additional

chapter also addresses safe activities for children after dark. Perfect for families, caretakers, and educators, this creative resource encourages children to turn off the television and play outside all year round.



[The Jumbo Book of Outdoor Art.](#) *Irene Luxbacher.* An attractive, colorful compilation of art projects.

Four major sections (Digging Deep, Going Green, It's All Elemental, and Fertile Ground) each contain more than a dozen activities and/or experiments. Good-quality illustrations and photos bring these ideas to life. An introduction discusses how to start a nature collection; respecting the environment; trying new tools, techniques, and materials; staying safe; and having fun. Most of the projects can be completed in 5 to 12 steps with materials either purchased at an art-supply or novelty store, or found outside. Topics include marbling, frozen patterned paper, flower prints, bubble painting, rock research, and ancient art. Children will polish their creative skills with a wide variety of artistic experiences, such as a secret garden, silly sprouts, terrific topiaries, beautiful batik, super spider's web, weathervanes, great flowing fountain, sparkling ice chandeliers, and more



[Asphalt to Ecosystems: Design Ideas for Schoolyard Transformation.](#) *Sharon Gamson Danks.*

With this book, Danks broadens our notion of what a well-designed schoolyard should be, taking readers on a journey from traditional, ordinary grassy fields and asphalt, to explore the vibrant and growing movement to "green" school grounds in the United States and around the world. This book documents exciting green schoolyard examples from almost 150 schools in 11 countries, illustrating that a great many things are possible on school grounds when they are envisioned as outdoor classrooms for hands-on learning and play.

The book's 500 vivid, color photographs showcase some of the world's most innovative green schoolyards including: edible gardens with fruit trees, vegetables, chickens, honey bees, and outdoor cooking facilities; wildlife habitats with prairie grasses and ponds, or forest and desert ecosystems; schoolyard watershed models, rainwater catchment systems and waste-water treatment wetlands; renewable energy systems that power landscape features, or the whole school; waste-as-a-resource projects that give new life to old materials in beautiful ways; K-12 curriculum connections for a wide range of disciplines from science and math to art and social studies; creative play opportunities that diversify school ground recreational options and encourage children to run, hop, skip, jump, balance, slide, and twirl, as well as explore the natural world first hand. The book grounds these examples in a practical framework that illustrates simple landscape design choices that all schools can use to make their schoolyards more comfortable, enjoyable and beautiful, and describes a participatory design process.

**For more information on reconnecting kids with nature,
including Family Nature Walks:**

<http://www.earthskids.com/kidzclub.aspx>

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