

Spring Session Curriculum Overview

Saturdays March 7th – May 30th

The Spring Session of Nature School, presented by Max Credit Union, at Montgomery Whitewater, invites young learners to discover the magic of seasonal change through hands-on exploration and play. As spring comes to life, students will investigate vernal pools and tadpoles, dig into soil science and worms, and celebrate pollinators and flowering plants.

Through age-appropriate activities like sensory play, nature journaling, simple experiments, movement games, and guided observation, children will learn how living things grow, interact, and depend on one another. The spring curriculum encourages curiosity, creativity, and confidence while helping students build a foundational understanding of ecosystems and their role in caring for the natural world

.March: Vernal Pools & Tadpoles

- **Ages 2–4:** Sensory aquatic play; "Tadpole Wiggle" movement games; spotting "frog jelly" (eggs).
- **Ages 5–7:** Life cycle sequencing; using magnifying jars to observe gills; drawing the four stages of a frog.
- **Ages 8–10:** Water quality testing (pH and temp); identifying specific frog species by call and egg cluster shape.

April: Soil Secrets & Worms

- **Ages 2–4:** Digging for "wigglers"; dirt painting; sensory sorting of rocks, sand, and soil.
- **Ages 5–7:** Building a classroom worm bin; anatomy of a worm; identifying "Beneficials" vs "Pests."
- **Ages 8–10:** Studying the Nitrogen Cycle; soil composition tests (Jar settling method); vermicompost "tea" preparation.

May: The Pollinator Parade

- **Ages 2–4:** Flower color matching; "Bee-to-Flower" relay races; smelling different nectar sources.
- **Ages 5–7:** Dissecting a flower to find the pollen; building a bamboo "Bug Hotel"; mapping the local garden.
- **Ages 8–10:** Solitary bee vs. Honeybee study; observing pollination behavior (frequency/duration); microscopic pollen view.

Please note: The curriculum outlined above represents planned learning themes and activities for the Nature School. Montgomery Whitewater reserves the right to modify, adapt, or change the Nature School curriculum at any time, for any reason, with or without notice.

Summer Session Curriculum Overview

Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays: June 1st – July 31th

Saturdays: August 1st – August 29th

The Summer Session of Nature School, presented by Max Credit Union, at Montgomery Whitewater, is all about movement, discovery, and wonder: following butterflies, splashing through creek habitats, and uncovering the fascinating world of insects and arachnids. Students will track monarchs and caterpillars, explore aquatic life through hands-on creek studies, and observe the incredible engineering of webs, wings, and camouflage.

Through playful exploration, outdoor investigations, creative projects, and guided experiments, children will learn how plants and animals survive, migrate, hunt, and adapt during the busiest season of the year. The summer curriculum encourages curiosity, confidence, and connection while helping students develop a deeper appreciation for biodiversity and the natural systems around them.

June: The Monarch Mission

- **Ages 2–4:** Searching for "Chewed Leaves"; Monarch lifecycle story-time; butterfly wing art.
- **Ages 5–7:** Milkweed monitoring; measuring caterpillar length in mm; identifying the 5 "instar" stages.
- **Ages 8–10:** Citizen Science tagging (if applicable); study of the O.E. parasite; mapping the migration to Mexico.

July: Aquatic Bio-Blitz

- **Ages 2–4:** Flood Plain Explorers; BOG Stomping & Bank Scavenging; finding animal tracks
- **Ages 5–7:** Dip-netting for minnows; identifying "Macro-invertebrates" (Nymphs vs. Adults).
- **Ages 8–10:** Biodiversity index counting; studying the "Food Web" of the creek; dichotomous key usage for ID.

August: Web-Weavers & Mantises

- **Ages 2–4:** Spraying mist on webs to see the patterns; "Sticky" vs "Non-sticky" silk touch; Mantis "hide and seek."
- **Ages 5–7:** Web geometry drawing; finding Mantis oothecas; observing a predator/prey interaction.
- **Ages 8–10:** Engineering study: Tensile strength of silk; Camouflage techniques (Mimicry); Arachnid vs. Insect anatomy.

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Autumn Session Curriculum Overview

Saturdays September 5th – November 28th

The Autumn Session of Nature School, presented by Max Credit Union, at Montgomery Whitewater, celebrates changing seasons, migration, seeds, and the quiet preparations nature makes for winter. Students will explore how birds travel, how plants spread their seeds, and how animals and trees get ready for colder months. From watching the skies and collecting seeds to studying tree rings and signs of winter, fall becomes a season of discovery and reflection.

Through hands-on exploration, creative projects, nature journaling, and simple experiments, children will learn how living things adapt to seasonal change and survive the winter ahead. The autumn curriculum encourages observation, patience, and curiosity while helping students build a deeper understanding of life cycles, habitats, and the rhythms of the natural world.

September: The Final Flight

- **Ages 2–4:** "Fly South" obstacle courses; listening for bird honks; making pinecone bird feeders.
- **Ages 5–7:** Feather anatomy; learning to use binoculars; tracking the "Pacific vs. Central" flyways.
- **Ages 8–10:** Raptor identification (wing shapes); creating bar graphs of bird counts; study of thermals and wind.

October: Seed Sovereignty

- **Ages 2–4:** Seed "Treasure Hunt"; sorting by size and texture; "Sock Walk" to catch hitchhiker seeds.
- **Ages 5–7:** Categorizing dispersal (Wind, Water, Animal); opening milkweed pods; "Whirlybird" flight tests.
- **Ages 8–10:** Seed cleaning and storage; study of "Cold Stratification"; calculating seed-to-fruit ratios.

November: The Winter Sleep

- **Ages 2–4:** Winter home building for "Fairies/Animals"; evergreen needle rubbings; finding hibernation spots.
- **Ages 5–7:** Bark rubbings; identifying "Signs of Winter" (buds/scat); insulation experiments (Keep the "egg" warm).
- **Ages 8–10:** Tree core/ring study (Dendrochronology); understanding "Dormancy" in plants; prepping the worm bin for freeze.

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