

Sensory games and
scavenger hunts

Parent pack



Outdoor sensory activities

These activities can take place in your backyard, a local park or bushland reserve. The closer and more immersed in nature the more you will see, hear smell and touch.

Meet a tree

Trees are an essential part of our lives. They provide us with the clean air we breathe, shade during summer and are valuable as important and unique habitat for our animals such as koalas. Meet a tree will help you distinguish the many cool differences between trees.

Head outside in pairs with a piece of cloth, for this exercise one person is blindfolded and the other will guide them. Lead the blindfolded person on a short walk, allowing them to concentrate on their other senses by taking away our most used sense – sight.

1. Lead the person through a variety of sensory experiences.
2. Sunlight, shade, open area, trees, grassy, rocky – always going very slowly and building their confidence in you as their leader.
3. Select a tree and leave the blindfolded person at that tree.
4. Tell them to take in as much as possible about the tree.
5. Feel and smell its bark, leaves and surroundings and listen to what might be around.
6. Now while still blindfolded, walk the person away from the tree, remove the blindfold and ask them to find his/her tree based on what they learnt.
7. Did they find it?
8. Pick another tree and feel and smell the differences between trees.



Sensory sensations bushwalk

Our bushland provides a sensory buffet. Smell the flowers, listen for the birds and see the ore of a huge gum tree. A sensory sensations bushwalk will help you hone in on these senses like never before.

Take a walk through bushland or your backyard and focus on your sense of smell and nature that is surrounding you.

1. What does the bark of a tree smell like?
2. What do some crushed leaves smell like?
3. What do the flowers and grasses smell like?
4. Why do different things have different smells?
5. Are they trying to attract insects and birds?
6. What is your favourite smell in nature?



One metre walk

Shrinking our field of perception often adds to our awareness and by closely examining a very small area, you will be amazed at the wonders you might discover that might otherwise be overlooked. One meter walk highlights the very little things that you may walk past every day without noticing.

For this exercise you'll need a piece of string or rope that is one metre long for each person.

1. Everyone grab their piece of one metre long string or rope.
2. Each person places it stretch out on the ground in different areas such as on grass, in the bush or under a tree.
3. Explore the area carefully along the entire length of the string or rope.
4. Look closely for signs of animals, birds or insects, distinctive characteristics of any plants, textures of soil or sand, different colours etc.
5. Record your findings and share them with your family or others. What were the differences across the areas?
6. Choose another area and repeat to see what else you can find.

Rainbow pallet of nature

What colours in nature's pallet can you find? Nature includes a rainbow of colours. Certain colours attract certain animals and some even change through-out the four seasons. The rainbow pallet of nature will help you see many amazing colours.

Head out to your local hardware store and collect some paint card samples. If you cannot head out you can also print them at home from a simple search on the internet. Your colour charts can include all colours: pinks, reds, greens, yellows and blues.

1. Firstly, take a scrap book or piece of paper and a pencil with your colour chart.
2. Head out for a walk and try to match the colours on your chart with natural things you can, these could include a purple flower, yellow lichen or pink bark of a Red Gum eucalypt.
3. What can you find – draw a picture of the matches you've found in your own nature journal.
4. Swap charts and repeat to find the other colours in nature's pallet.

Nature Rubbings

Texture is a huge part of our environment, almost everything that you can touch has a different texture. Nature rubbings will help you experience different textures through art.

Walk around outdoors to collect various textured objects. This could include leaves, tree bark, rocks, seed pods etc. Ensure that what you are collecting doesn't form part of an animal's habitat.

1. Make a rubbing, to do this place a piece of paper on top of the object.
2. Rub the paper gently with crayons (you may want to use the side of the crayon) until the texture of the object appears.
3. The object and its texture will be imprinted on the paper. Experiment with overlapping rubbings over each other.
4. This works very well with different shaped leaves, rubbed in different colours overlapping each other.
5. If your objects are free of crayon, return them to where you found them for an animal's habitat.



Camouflage hide and seek

One of the most common adaptations in nature is camouflage – the ability of an animal to blend into its environment and protect itself from prey. Camouflage hide and seek helps to highlight the importance of camouflage.

This game is best played in a local reserve with lots of tree canopy and shrubs.

1. Begin by selecting one person to represent the predator. The predator is blindfolded and stands in the centre of the play area. Remaining players are prey, when the signal is given they run to hide.
2. They must be able to see the predator from their hiding spot.
3. When all of the prey are hidden the predator may remove their blindfold.
4. The predator scans the surrounding territory, naming or describing the location of anyone they can see.
5. These prey are caught and come to the centre.
6. Take turns of being the predator and the prey and using your best methods of camouflage.



Connecting to the Natural World



Special Spots

Plants and animals have special spots in places they live. These are places where they might hide or catch their food. Special spots helps to highlight that many of these places are special and important for the plants and animals that live around us.

Head outside to one of your local bushland reserves, whilst on your bushwalk spread out and find a special spot. This could be near a rock shelf, a tree hollow, under a log or in the long grass. In your special spot you will be like a giant, so you will need to inspect it closely to discover why exactly your spot is so special.

1. First thing to remember when you enter your special spot is that you are entering a little community that has already existed before you arrived, so it's important not to do anything which would damage your spot
2. Look carefully at the rocks, dirt, grass and sticks. What shapes are they? Where do you think they came from?
3. What living things do you find? How do they depend on non-living things in your spot?
4. What sounds or smells do you experience?
5. Take time to be still and observe everything around you.
6. Record your findings and what makes your spot so special.

Past and Future

It's hard to imagine what the areas we live in would have been like before Europeans arrived. Depending on where you are the changes may be huge while in other areas it might almost be as it was. Past and future will help highlight the changes and spark your imaginations of the past.

This can be completed anywhere outside.

1. Firstly, take a scrap book or piece of paper and a pencil.
2. Imagine what everything would have been like 200 years ago, what would it have been like?
3. What things can you see now that would not have been there 200 years ago?
4. What things could you have seen 200 years ago that you can't see now?
5. What things are the same?
6. Can you imagine what it might look like in another 200 years' time?
7. Draw a picture of what it may have looked like 200 years ago.
8. Draw a picture of what it looks like now.
9. Draw a picture of the future.
10. Compare the pictures.



Tree Talk

The more we appreciate and understand something, the less likely we are to harm it. This is especially true with the natural world and all of the things within it. Tree talk helps to emphasise an attitude which can help us to make intelligent decisions in regards to our environment.

1. Head outside and choose the biggest tree you can see.
2. Describe the first thing that comes to mind when you look at the tree.
3. Each person that is there can speak about the tree for 30 seconds and comments can be either descriptive or imaginative.
Some handy hints - You might consider the tree's height, age, colouring and special markings, leaf or needle structure, root systems, branches, shade or its relationships with birds and animals, what it has 'seen' in its lifetime, how it 'feels' about losing its leaves, how it likes its location or how it gets along with its neighbours. What other living things are dependent on this tree? What is this tree is dependent on?
4. After each person has had an opportunity to speak and they feel they really 'know' the tree, would you want to cut the tree down?
5. People often do not consider all of the beauties that a tree has: its history, the benefits it provides or the animals that rely on it for food or habitat. After considering these, people are rarely willing to cut the tree down and it often leads into a good discussion about appreciation of the natural world.
6. This can be adapted with any plant or animal as the focus.

Scavenger Hunts

Sometimes we cannot see the interrelationships in the natural world. It's much more than what we see from our window each day and when you look closer, everything somehow has its place in the environment. These scavenger hunts will help to open the senses and discover the intricacies in the natural world.

Head into your local bushland reserve and keep your eyes peeled, there is lots to look for.

Awareness Scavenger Hunt

- ☐ Something humans can't live without.
- ☐ Something red.
- ☐ The youngest thing you can find.
- ☐ The oldest thing you can find.
- ☐ Two different seeds.
- ☐ Something with a smooth texture.
- ☐ Something with a soft texture.
- ☐ Something scary.
- ☐ Something natural that has no purpose.
- ☐ Could you find the last one?

Sound Scavenger Hunt

- ☐ A cricket chirping.
- ☐ Grasses moving.
- ☐ An aeroplane.
- ☐ A car.
- ☐ A bird.
- ☐ Wind/breeze.
- ☐ A stick breaking.
- ☐ A frog.
- ☐ A tree.
- ☐ What does a tree sound like?

Rock Scavenger Hunt

- ☐ A metamorphic rock.
- ☐ An Igneous rock.
- ☐ A sedimentary rock.
- ☐ A sharp rock.
- ☐ A flat rock.
- ☐ A bumpy rock.
- ☐ A crumbly rock.
- ☐ A smooth rock .
- ☐ A rough rock.
- ☐ A dull rock.
- ☐ A rock with speckles.
- ☐ A rock with stripes.
- ☐ A multi-coloured rock.
- ☐ A rock with only one colour.

Natural Treasures Scavenger Hunt

- ☐ Look for an object that has a regular lines and shapes in its structure. Think about how that form is related to what its purpose is?
- ☐ Describe something that has power in nature
- ☐ Look for a natural object that has five parts
- ☐ Find an object that has at least four colours showing
- ☐ Find a something that changes that is predictable
- ☐ Take a familiar object from the unnatural environment.

Find and demonstrate a new use for it in the natural environment.

Time Scavenger Hunt

- ☐ Find something you think is the oldest living thing around you.
- ☐ Find the youngest living thing around you.
- ☐ Find something eroded by water.
- ☐ Find something you think is 100 years old.
- ☐ Find something you think is one million years old.
- ☐ An example of an animal that lives in an area that has been adapted by man.
- ☐ Draw a sketch of what the area looked like before man.

Conservation Scavenger Hunt

- ☐ Dumped rubbish.
- ☐ A sketch of a place where a dam has helped to stop erosion.
- ☐ Something that causes erosion.
- ☐ Something that could cause a fire.
- ☐ An example of soil that does not hold water.
- ☐ An example of soil that does hold water well.
- ☐ A piece of wood which has been infected by boring beetles.
- ☐ An example of balance in nature.
- ☐ Something that protects the soil.
- ☐ Something man-made that doesn't belong here.

Animal Detective Scavenger Hunt

- ☐ A set of tracks (what animal do you think made them?).
- ☐ Scat (did the animal eat plants or animals?).
- ☐ A burrow.
- ☐ A pile of bush rock.
- ☐ A tree hollow.
- ☐ Scribbles on the bark of a tree (twisting trails which are made from bugs that eat live in between layers of the bark).
- ☐ A termite nest.

Insect Scavenger Hunt

- ☐ A beetle.
- ☐ An ant.
- ☐ A bee or wasp.
- ☐ A fly.
- ☐ A grasshopper.
- ☐ A mosquito.
- ☐ A butterfly.
- ☐ A cricket.
- ☐ A moth.
- ☐ An insect without wings.
- ☐ An insect with wings.
- ☐ An insect with three colours.
- ☐ An insect with one colour.
- ☐ An insect egg.
- ☐ An insect eating a plant.
- ☐ An insect eating another insect.
- ☐ An insect pollinating a flower.
- ☐ An insect drinking nectar from a plant.
- ☐ An insect coloured to blend into its background.
- ☐ An insect with two wings.
- ☐ An insect with four wings.
- ☐ An insect that lives in a 'society'.
- ☐ An example of a larvae.

Plant Scavenger Hunt

- ☐ A seed which is specially adapted to blow in the wind.
- ☐ An example of a plant which has lost its leaves to survive during drought.
- ☐ A leaf from a plant which has developed broad leaves to gather more sun.
- ☐ A berry from a plant which has developed to entice animals to carry its seeds.
- ☐ A leaf with serrated edges which prevents leaves from shading each other.
- ☐ The height (in cm) of a tall plant which gathers sunlight by rising above other plants.
- ☐ A leaf from a plant which has a sweet smell to attract birds and insects.
- ☐ A plant native to Australia.
- ☐ A plant that is from another country.





CAMPBELLTOWN

w campbelltown.nsw.gov.au
p 4645 4000