





A close encounter with a shield bug brings intrepid Amy to a halt—time to reinforce her observation skills.

The hunt for a prepared list of items, such as a pinecone and a letter-shape twig, soon becomes a quest for treasures. Spotting signs of wildlife, identifying tree types, collecting earthy tidbits—kids rise to the challenge as eager scavengers. They slow to take a closer look and connect with their environment by making bark and leaf rubbings. They even pick up trash with glee—another treasure!

You'll need little for a scavenger hunt. Inspire observation by using few tools, such as binoculars, magnifying glasses, and field guides to trees, birds, wildflowers, and insects. Ground rules (see box on page 37) also help. Stock a backpack with basics (insect repellent, sunscreen, plastic grocery bags for collecting trash, a whistle, hand cleaner, bottled water, and snacks). Provide participants with homemade treasure bags and tree journals. Plan your nature walk and scavenger hunt to suit the ages and interests of the hunters as well as the location. And above all, aim to have fun. Now you're ready for adventure. Happy trails!

RIGHT and INSET: Provide every hunter with a handy bag for gathering finds, like Yasha with her pinecone. Pack each bag with a pencil, crayon, and tree journal. **BELOW:** Thomas (left) and Maksim use a field guide to identify birds they see—and birds they wish to see in this woods where evergreens are scarce.



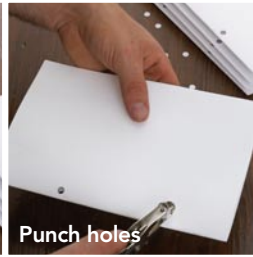
Compile a List

Items for your scavenger hunt will vary regionally. Here are suggestions to help you get started:

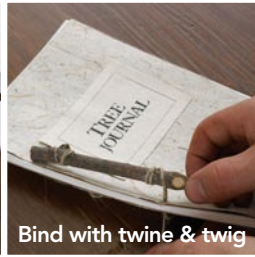
- Pinecone
- Piece of bark
- White pebble or river stone
- Any leaf of a color other than green
- Twig in the shape of a letter
- Pine needles
- Feather
- Eggshell
- Three different-shape leaves
- Clover leaf
- Seed or seedpod
- Acorn, buckeye, walnut, or hickory nut
- Dandelion
- Milkweed pod
- Seashell or a dried piece of seaweed



Fold pages



Punch holes



Bind with twine & twig

Tree Journal Questions

Type and print the following questions using a computer, then make a copy for each tree journal. Fill the remainder of the journal with blank pages for bark and leaf rubbings, drawings, field notes, and creative writing.

- Describe today's weather.
- Where are you?
- Who are you with?
- Which tree is your favorite? Why?
- What creatures are living in a tree that you found? How can you tell?
- Close your eyes: What do you hear?
- Stand in place and turn slowly in a circle: What do you see?
- Lie down at the base of a tree: What do you see?



ABOVE: Do you see what I see? A giant magnifier makes it even more fun for Amy (left) and Adelaide to scrutinize their treasures, from nubby bark to lush moss.

RIGHT: John makes a bark rubbing, using only paper and crayon, and discovers the tactile pleasure in identifying an oak tree.

OPPOSITE: Terrayn enjoys sharing her thoughts in her tree journal.



Ground Rules for Nature Walks

Begin your adventure by explaining the parameters of a nature walk and scavenger hunt.

- Make sure everyone is dressed for the weather with appropriate footwear, hats, and such. Walking sticks may come in handy.
- Hunt with a buddy or an adult. Have an adult supervise each small group of children.
- Stay on the paths or within clearly delineated boundaries.
- Follow this adage: Take only pictures; leave only footprints (beyond ordinary items found on the ground). While you're at it, collect trash.
- Point out poison ivy and remind everyone how to avoid exposure to it.



A nature walk inspires young collectors like Jason to add to their treasure troves and explore the finds again on a rainy day.

More Natural Treasures

- Follow our lead and gather bushels of information, ideas, and inspiration from the Take a Walk series of books by Jane Kirkland. In *Take a Tree Walk*, find the "Tree Notes" and "Nature ID Page" and copy them for your tree journals. Find downloads and more details at takeawalk.com.
- Find more ways to strengthen observation skills and support positive personal connections with the natural world through research-based activities of the Nature Explore Club at arborday.org.
- For fun, take A Walk in the Woods at urbanext.uiuc.edu/woods/naturenotes.html.
- Create a nature journal at *Ranger Rick* magazine: nwf.org/kidzone/kzPage.cfm?siteId=3&departmntId=152.
- Let treemusketeers.org empower young people to become leaders of environmental and social change.
- Explore other ways to celebrate Arbor Day by planting and caring for trees, and passing on an appreciation of trees to the next generation at arborday.org. 🌱

See Resources on page 108.



ABOVE: Now that these young ones know what it means to go on a nature scavenger hunt, they happily share their leafy treasures and deem the day a success.