

# BUILD YOUR OWN NATURE BACKPACK



## Ideas for Your Backpack

- Journal and drawing pencils
- Camera and binoculars
- Magnifying glass
- Collection container to view nature for a short time
- Dipping net for pond studies
- Nature story or activity book
- Animal or plant identification sheets or books (remember to change them depending on interest - bugs, butterflies, trees, birds etc)
- Flash light for nighttime adventures
- First aid supplies
- Maps or guidebooks if visiting a new area
- Whistle (for safety)



## CREATE MEMORIES IN NATURE

Nature can be found in your backyard, neighbourhood park, conservation area or your local forest. It's a worm crawling across a sidewalk, a butterfly resting on a flower, leaves blowing in the wind or a hawk soaring in the sky.



Take time to be fascinated by the simple and magical moments that nature provides.

## Tips for family outings

- 1 Let your child set the pace. Don't stress about scheduling! Let nature and the moment guide you.
- 2 Be curious. Questions like "what tree is this?" or "how does a butterfly fly?" are opportunities to learn with your child.
- 3 Take a backpack filled with a variety of items to use as you explore.
- 4 Dress for the weather – rain, shine, cold and snow. Wear comfortable clothing that you don't mind getting dirty or wet.
- 5 Let your child decide how to explore, whether that means choosing which path to take or what bug to look at!
- 6 Balance your needs with your child's needs. If you'd don't like bugs, try focusing on other parts of nature you do like.



## NATURE ACTIVITY BOOKS

Here are a few ideas for activity books to borrow from your local library.

*The Kids' Outdoor Adventure Book - 448 Great Things to Do in Nature Before you Grow Up*, Stacy Tornio and Ken Keffer

*101 Things to do Outside*, Lisa Moser

*Get Outside - The Kids Guide to Fun in the Great Outdoors*, Jane Drake and Ann Love

### Having trouble motivating kids to get outside?

- Go outside with them and participate in exploring nature together.
- Have outdoor time as a regular part of the week that everyone joins in on.
- Limit screen time so there is less temptation to stay indoors.
- Talk about your experiences in nature when you were a kid and share your current enthusiasm.
- Organize a nature walk or play with friends and families.
- Try setting a goal to explore all 18 York Regional Forest properties, learn more at [www.york.ca/yrf](http://www.york.ca/yrf).
- Visit your local Conservation Areas.

## TICKS AND MOSQUITOES

**Lyme disease** is spread through the bite of an infected blacklegged tick. **West Nile** virus is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito.

**Remember:** When exploring natural areas, wear long pants tucked into socks, long sleeves, light coloured clothing, and check yourself and your family for ticks. Parents/caregivers can help with applying insect repellent containing DEET or icaridin. Follow the product instructions.

For more information, visit [york.ca/lymedisease](http://york.ca/lymedisease) or [york.ca/westnile](http://york.ca/westnile).

## AVOID CONTACT WITH THESE PLANTS

Poison ivy, giant hogweed and wild parsnip can cause skin irritations including rash, burns or blisters. Remember: If you are unsure of a plant or flower, don't touch it!

