



A weekly highlight of what our forest schoolers explored, learned, played, created, & so much more!

Spring Term: Week 4 – April 8 – 14, 2024

Our forest is coming alive! The buds are beginning to open at the tip of every tree branch, wild ramps and trout lilies are making their appearance on the forest floor, and even the trilliums are beginning to poke their heads out, waiting for the tree canopy to provide them with some shade before their blooms arrive. We talked about how these next few weeks are a special time for the growth of our forest including the importance of spring rain and having gentle feet and hands as we explore. Spring is energizing and this week, we all felt it.

Seeds (5-7 years)

- Explored Insects and signs of spring in the forest
- Learned the distinctive parts of an insect and illustrated our own versions of them - they have 3 body parts, 6 legs and 2 antennae - sometimes they can have 2 or 4 wings like a dragonfly or bee
- Searched for insects and other types of bugs - found many worms and millipedes in the soil and under logs
- Stacked and balanced wood onto each other, added leaves and sunglasses to create a funny forest creature
- Played camouflage and a new game called "Categories" - created by the group involving teamwork and communication
- Played a game collecting small wooden tokens that represent insects caught in a giant spider's web
- Created at the mud kitchen, baking chocolate cakes and other yummy treats
- Collected rainwater in buckets, built a water filter to clean it and use it for washing our hands, and wrote a song and performance about it for all to hear
- Established some new and refined woodworking skills using saws, chisels, mallets and knives

Sprouts (7-10 years)

- Went on a bug hunt looking for insects and other critters - we found worms, large beetles, sow bugs, eggs and spiders under logs, in between bark and in the soil
- Learned that to be considered an "insect", a bug must have 3 distinct body parts, 6 legs, 2 antennae and 0-4 wings - that means worms, spiders and millipedes are NOT insects
- Explored and built an ant using loose parts - rolled 2 die, and when they added and multiplied together to equal 6, we added a new part of the ant
- Explored the forest to find salamanders hidden in shady damp areas, listened for birds by the pond, and discovered a waterfall at mushroom valley
- Found and processed clay to use for sculpting
- Created a balance beam, a mud cafe serving cake, pudding and coffee, and a pretend workout gym to build our muscles
- Built a boat fort with a post and pulley system for fishing and started a giant tipi
- Made a fire using magnifying glasses and the sun
- Played charades in the rain, Toro, and Turkey Tag

Forest Rangers (11-14 years)

- Learned about splitting full logs, including the placement of the wedge (hatchet) and using the weight of the log to split
- Discovered how there can be hidden surprises inside a log like knots and branches that hold them together
- Played a new "spider web" game through trail networks that got our bodies moving and required us to look closely on the trails for "bugs"/wooden points to collect
- Explored the creek and went bug catching; tested our courage getting up close to a wolf spider
- Harnessed the power of the sun and used a magnifying glass to do some wood burning

Roots & Shoots (0-6 years)

- Hunted for worms and other signs of spring
- Hiked through the Maple Forest, Headless Hemlock Trail, and Beech Trail, finding trout lilies, wild ramps, and muddy puddles
- Sang songs about going on a worm hunt, finding a worm, and things we love about spring
- Embraced the rain and enjoyed the pitter patter sounds of the raindrops in the forest

Monthly Seeds (5-6 years)

- Spent the day at a new site - the Nest!
- Explored insects, their many distinctive parts and went on a bug hunt in the forest getting our hands dirty
- Built a scale using wooden pieces and 2 glass jars, exploring how to make them balance
- Looking at tiny mites under a microscope
- Crushed clay soil into a fine powder, filtered out any large particles and rocks through a sieve, and added water until it made the perfect consistency for sculpting
- Explored different ways of keeping our clay smooth and wet until we were done, and practiced gentle pressure to get the exact shape we wanted

Our week began sunny and warm, and ended with lots of rain. However, we know the importance of spring rain for the growth of our beloved forest. We jumped at every opportunity to play, dance and explore in the rain this week, and had such a fun time doing it.

As they say, April showers bring May flowers!



A shot of the sky at Dogwood during the eclipse on Monday – the birds went quiet and there was a calmness about the day



Roots & Shoots creating in the mud kitchen



Exploring old “bug trails” on a log – cool patterns and markings on the log



Building with loose parts – tires, ropes, and ideas



Drawing insects and labelling their parts



There is always wood to chop...



Perfect week for muddy creations



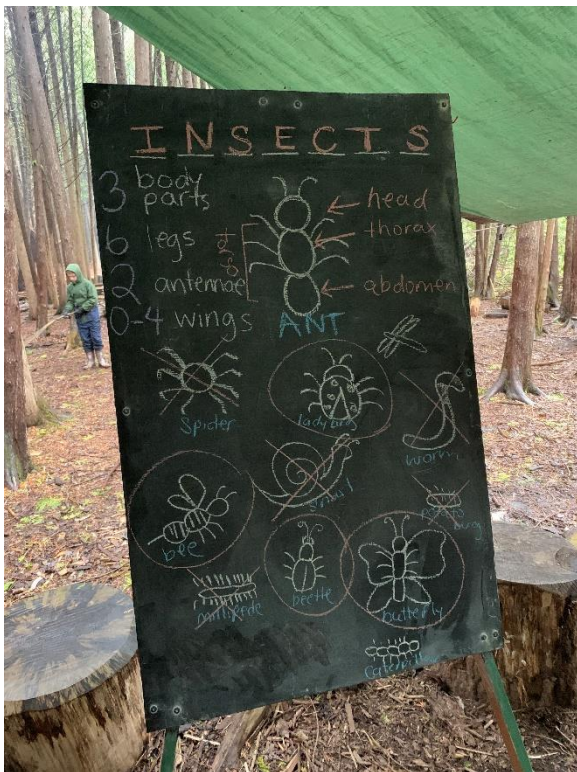
Exploring balance over a creek



Say hello to our little mud friend!



A granulated Ground Beetle



Learning about what makes an insect, an insect



The rain didn't bother our Roots & Shoots! Made for a peaceful walk through the forest



Wild Ramps are starting to grow – they have a garlic taste and come from the onion family



Little Shoots bouncing on a log



Mud and Boots are the perfect pairing



Some Sprouts working on a tipi structure



Comparing our wooden worm to a real worm



Built a balance scale and tested out which items were heavier or lighter



Bloodroot Flower – an early spring bloom



Swinging with friends



Searching for worms beneath the leaf litter



Filtering and collecting rain water



A robin buffet – earth worms on a wood platter



Mushrooms are happy with all of this rain!