

CLOSTER NATURE CENTER NEWS

P.O. BOX 80, CLOSTER NJ 07624 closternaturecenter.org

By the pond on Ruckman Road

MAY 2021

MAY ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS:

May After School Program

Come join Nature Marc at the Closter Nature Center for some outdoor science fun! Our afternoon programs are designed to accent school system's half-days and online curricula. We will be keeping our class sizes small and will be adhering to CDC standards.

Masks required. Please dress for the weather, as we will be outside for the entire program.

To register please go to: <https://register.communitypass.net/Closter>, and you will be taken to Community Pass, our online registration and payment system.

If you have any questions please call Marc at (201) 750-2778.

\$100/session for Members - \$120/session Non-members

Mondays, 3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th

1st - 3rd Gr. 2:00 - 3:15 PM

4th - 6th Gr. 3:45 - 5:00 PM

Tuesdays, 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th

1st - 3rd Gr. 2:00 - 3:15 PM

Kindergarten 3:45 - 5:00 PM

Wednesdays, 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th

4th - 6th Gr. 2:00 - 3:15 PM

1st - 3rd 3:45 - 5:00 PM

Thursdays, 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th

Kindergarten 2:00 - 3:15 PM

1st- 3rd Gr. 3:45 - 5:00 PM

Mrs. Wonderwhy's Nature Fun for Little Ones

Toddlers, Preschoolers and their caregivers are invited to join Mrs. Wonderwhy for fun and educational outdoor adventures! In our newest adventure, we'll become Junior Nature Detectives and explore the woods using our amazing five senses! Together, we'll make our own "binoculars" to help us search for and collect treasures from the forest floor so we can investigate closer, listen for animals, smell native plants and more!

Sign-up is for three one-hour Friday sessions.

Toddlers (ages 2 & 3) Fridays, May 7th, 14th, & 21st 11:00 AM - 12 PM

Preschoolers (ages 3 & 4) Fridays, May 7th, 14th, & 21st 1:30 - 2:30 PM

Cost is \$60 for Members, \$75 for Non-Members

Classes are held outdoors. **Rain date: May 28th for both groups.**

Please understand that this is not a drop-off program, and adult caregivers will be asked to join in on the fun while helping Mrs. Wonderwhy (aka long-time preschool instructor Maria Costa) keep children safe. All participants must abide by Covid-19 CDC guidelines which currently include masks for all participants over the age of 2 1/2.

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to: <https://register.communitypass.net/Closter>, and you will be taken to Community Pass, our online registration and payment system.

If you have any questions, please email admin@closternaturecenter.org.

Cute Kid's Quote

A three year old was visiting the Nature Center with her aunt when my friend Maria and I introduced ourselves. The aunt turned to her niece and said, "say hi to them" the girl looked up, smiled, and said "Hi them."

Closter Nature Center Annual Meeting

Tuesday, May 4th at 7pm

Meeting point: Log Cabin by the Pond

Please join us for a guided walk in the Nature Center followed by a brief report on our fiscal year.

In a year filled with challenges brought on by the pandemic, our community is so lucky to have 136-acres of woods, ponds and trails literally in our own backyard. It provides a respite from long days at the computer and a place to go when "outside" is the only option. We saw lots of new faces at the pond and hope that they will become regular visitors and volunteers in the years to come.

The Nature Center is managed by a mainly volunteer, non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of open space in its natural form. Our Board is also dedicated to the idea that hands-on education and enjoyment of our natural world is important and necessary.

Once a year, the Closter Nature Center Board of Trustees updates its members and the community on where we are and where we hope to be in the future. This includes a report on the environmental health of the forest as well as the financial health of the organization.

Hope to see you there!

Coming Soon:

In the coming month, new signage will begin to appear around the Nature Center, creating a more uniform graphic style for sharing information. Smaller tags will appear on a variety of trees, to help with identification so visitors will know if they are looking at a red oak, a maple, an American sweetgum, a black locust or a tulip tree. Be on the lookout!

Naturalist's Notes

Almost as quickly as we glorify the beauty of the natural world, we as humans can find things in nature to malign. Wolves, sharks and snakes, (the typical villains of folklore), have, under closer inspection, proven the masses wrong. Their benefit to ecosystems that they call home far outweighs the "damage" that they do.

One member of our forest community that often gets a bad rap is *Toxicodendron radicans*, or **poison ivy**. A close relative of cashews, mangoes, and pistachios, poison ivy is a native climbing vine that makes its home just about everywhere plants can grow in NJ. It can thrive in the shade of dense forests, in well-lit roadsides, and even just a stone's throw from the pounding surf of the New Jersey shore. Poison ivy loves the edge habitat created by development and suburbanization- and its proximity to people brings out the reason for human disdain for the plant: urushiol. This compound causes an allergic reaction in most people that can lead to everything from a mild itchy sensation at the site of contact with the plant to full blown anaphylaxis.

Poison ivy leaves grow in groups of three leaflets, its mature vine is covered with reddish-brown "fuzz" and its fruits are whitish-grey. The rhymes "leaves of three let it be", "hairy rope don't be a dope" and "berries white take flight" are based on these three characteristics of the plant. The key is to not touch the leaves, stems and vines, **or** touch things that have made contact with any parts of the plant. Even some of the most careful people get a reaction by touching tools used to cut it, touching the gloves used to pull it, or even by petting a dog that brushed up against it. The best procedure for removing urushiol is to wash tools, launder clothes, and carefully wash exposed skin with soap and copious amounts of water.

So, where is the "good" in all of this? First off, it seems as though it is only humans that are negatively affected by poison ivy. In addition, poison ivy is a member of our natural world, and it provides white berry-like fruits for many birds during the winter. Animals like deer, bears and raccoons eat the leaves. Lastly, poison ivy is beautiful in its own special way: from the red-tinged spring green leaves of May, to the 100-year-old thick, majestic vines climbing our forest trees. Learn to identify it to avoid the allergy- but also so you'll have a chance to appreciate and respect it as well.