

1. Bush critters - Natural Crafts

Opening

Join in a circle with Guides standing with arms linked. Sway left and right together and when the rhythm is going sing an opening song e.g. Hello. Or use the horseshoe ceremony in Guide Handbook 4. Once upon a time a young girl called Charlotte went out and found some special creatures in the bush. We are going to read her story and then explore the bush some more. Explain that we are using some items from the bush to make critters.

Charlotte and the Ants

Read the story of Charlotte and the Ants which is found in the Guide Handbook 1 and 2.

When Charlotte started to notice the bush critters around her, she was amazed and you will be too, I hope. Let's go on an adventure!

Bush Perfumes

Pick up a dried leaf from the ground. Crush it into small bits in your hand and close your hand over the leaf bits and count slowly to 20. Open your hand and smell the perfume you have made. You will get different perfumes depending on the type of leaves crushed and the amount of heat generated by your hands. Gum leaves are a lovely perfume, but watch out for stink bush!

Listen to the trees

Put your ear flat against the smooth trunk of a tree and you should be able to 'hear' a sound which is the tree living. It is a hollow echo type of sound of water slowly moving up the trunk.

Collections

Go on a walk with your Unit or Patrol. Look for things to collect. Remember, of course, not to collect items in National Parks and other places where you must leave things as you find them. You may like to choose smooth, interesting rocks, or seeds, or fallen branches with odd shaped forks, or small flowers, or a set of leaves of different shapes.

Sardines

The more players for this game, the more fun it is.

One player is chosen "it" and goes away to hide while the others count to one hundred. The first person to find "it" - if she's up a tree, for example - has to join "it" and wait for the others to find them. Everybody who finds "it" and friends has to hide with them, until only one person is left.

The first person to have found "it" can be the first to hide for the next round.



Pet Rocks

A good place to find smooth small rocks is in the bed of a stream or on a beach exposed to the surf. The water rolls and turns the rock until it is made smooth by nature, just ready for a decoration. Paint a face on a smooth rock. Or you could use google eyes. Decorate with shells, beads, feathers or other small objects. Name your pet rock.

Seed mosaics

Collect seeds from old pods. Blackwood pods have nice seeds if you can find them in autumn. Or the easy way to find seeds is to buy some bird seed from a shop. (But its more fun to look outdoors!)

Divide your seeds into different colours or shades. Draw a small picture on a postcard sized paper then 'paint' one colour section with glue and add the seeds. Keep going until you have a masterpiece!



Gumnut babies

Collect some large gumnuts – the larger the better. Ask around about a good place to look for a gum tree with large nuts. You will also need other items to use for arms or legs, a head, something for a cap or hair. Look carefully in the bush for just the right shapes! Add googly eyes or paint them on.

Habitat Hustle Game

You will need 6 hoops or large rope circles, and a bell or a whistle. Place the hoops in different parts of an area of bush. Explain that the hoops represent insect holes. Girls choose an insect or spider or mite to be and practise moving around as that animal would. For example, a grasshopper will jump. On a starting bell, they move around the bush searching for food. Another signal warns that a predator is in the area and they must quickly return to their nest. A Patrol Leader could be the predator and try to catch insects.

Branch Weaving

Find a sturdy forked branch and some awesome decorations. Good examples are feathers, strands of long grass, and leaves with interesting shapes. Tie on some string and weave your collection into the branch frame. Or you may like to fill the branch space with woven wool.



Mushroom spore prints

Cut the stem off a large mushroom and place the cap, gill side down, on a piece of craft paper. Put a jar or bowl over the cap and leave it overnight. In the morning carefully lift up the cap. You will see that the mushroom spores have left a circular pattern. Spray gently with fixative if you want to preserve your pattern.

Safety Note: Never eat a mushroom from the bush and always wash your hands well after handling wild mushrooms.

Pressed flower candles

You can jazz up a plain candle with pressed flowers or leaves. Melt some paraffin. Place the pressed flower on the side of the candle and use a paint brush to paint over the top and make it stick.

The Spider's Web Game

Girls hold hands and stand in a circle, forming a spider's web. One Guide is an insect and stands inside the circle. Another is the spider, prowling around the outside of the web. The insect must escape from the web without being caught by the spider. The web is so strong that that the insect can only escape by running under gaps made by the girls. The spider can move in and out of the web. The game ends when the insect escapes or is 'eaten' by the spider and two new people are up. The web can be made more difficult to escape if 'the wind is blowing' and the girls raise and lower their arms. Or the web can be a sticky web – if the insect touches the web they must go back inside the web and try again.

Closing

Gather in a circle. Finish by asking Guides to list the bush skills they practised. Talk about why knowing about our environment is a good way to learn and develop skills. Sing Taps.