



D.C. SCHOOLYARD

Greening

A Program of the D.C. Environmental Education Consortium

## Get Out and Garden!

### 10-Minute Field Trips

By Barbara Percival (Garden Coordinator, Watkins ES)

#### Fall Ideas:

- Find the tallest plant in different areas of the garden and measure it (or estimate height)
- Have each child collect different shaped leaves and sort them in class.
- Find 3 things that a bird/squirrel/insect might eat.
- Collect flowers or seed pods from the gardens and take them back to the classroom. Find and count the seeds (by 2s, 3s, 5s, 10s, etc.). Estimate first.
- Go through a garden and find evidence that animals have been in the garden (chewed leaves, broken acorns, bird poop, etc.).

#### Winter Ideas:

- Give every child a plastic or paper bag, and tell them that they have 5 minutes to collect different shaped leaves, or interesting twigs, or different berries. Use those as a platform to write, discuss shapes and sizes, colors, animal habitats, and more.
- Practice observation and memory skills: take a brisk walk and tell students to look for 5 signs of winter, 5 signs that animals have been in the garden, 5 sounds they hear, etc. Have students write down observations when they return to the classroom.
- Write seasonal stories pretending to be a seed, or an animal, faced with the oncoming winter.
- Walk around the school in the gardens. Where is the coldest spot? Warmest? Wettest? Why?

#### Spring Ideas:

- Look for signs of new growth. What do the first leaves look like? Talk about how we can tell that plants are starting to grow again.
- Find a plant that is just starting to grow. Make an observation (individually or as a group). Go back once a week (or other interval) and observe and measure the growth
- Look for signs of animals in the garden -- aphids on the plants, caterpillars, bird nests, etc.
- Observe a tree that is just starting to bud out. What is growing? [flowers] Why do trees have flowers? Go back and observe several times in the spring to watch the changes.
- [Later spring]: Go through the gardens and see how many pollinators you can see (bees, butterflies, etc.) What are they doing? Why? Why do we need pollinators?
- Pick some daffodils or tulips from the garden. Take them back to class and pull them apart. Identify the parts.

Other sources for more info:

***Ten Minute Field Trips*** by Helen Ross Russell. Book available on the NSTA scienceStore Web site.

***Five Minute Field Trips*** was produced through a partnership between the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, the Calgary Zoo, and the Global Environmental and Outdoor Education Council (GEOEC). To download a copy, go to <http://www.dcschoolyardgreening.org/5min-fieldtrips.pdf>.