The Learning Landscape
Environmental Education Field Trip
At the URI Kingston Botanical Garden

Native Mammals

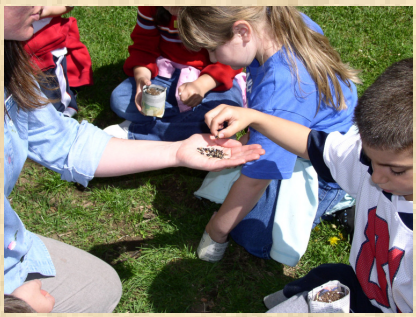
Have you ever wondered what coyote fur feels like? Do you know which mammal is also the only native North American marsupial? What can teeth tell us about what an animal eats and how it lives? Discover the wild native mammals that make New England their home. Students are invited to participate in an up-close investigation of skins and skulls to answer these questions, and many more!

Native Birds

What makes birds unique in the animal kingdom? Why, feathers, of course! See how the structure of a feather helps to make flight possible. Students investigate wings, beaks, and feet to understand what various adaptations tell us about the birds in our own backyard. They also gain an appreciation for birds as architects by studying nest design and materials.

Recycle, Reuse and Renew

Everyone knows that they should recycle, but do you know what happens to recycled materials after you put them in the bin? Did you know that the fleece sweatshirt in your closet may have fibers made from recycled plastic milk bottles? Or that glass must be sorted by color before it can be melted down for reuse? Students learn some fun recycling facts while making a project to take home that uses recyclable materials.



Seed Starting

Growing your own plants from seed can be fun and rewarding, and that's something that the students who visit the Learning Landscape understand first-hand. Using planters that they make themselves, students plant seeds to bring home. At the same time, they learn about what seeds need in order to germinate, and how to care for their growing plants.

Animal Signs

Can you tell what kinds of animals live near you without seeing them? You can if you understand animal signs! Students are encouraged to use their powers of observation to look for the clues that animals leave behind. From obvious signs like antlers shed by deer, to the less recognizable pellets that owls regurgitate after a meal, students embark on a hands-on exploration of the tracks and other remnants that become easy to see once you know what to look for.

IPM, Beneficial and Pest Insects

Do you know the difference between an insect and an arachnid? Or which small group of insects are True Bugs? We can help de-mystify the world of creepy-crawlies.

Our world wouldn't be the same without the wide array of insect pollinators that many plants rely on in order to reproduce. But not all insects are considered desirable, particularly the ones that carry diseases or damage crops. Most insecticides are non-specific and will harm beneficial and pest insects alike. So what else can people do? The answer is Integrated Pest Management - a way of working *with* nature to eliminate the pests while preserving the rest!

Seed Diversity

Do you know the difference between a monocot and a dicot, or which seed is the worlds largest? Can you name ten seeds that you eat on a regular basis? Students learn the answers to these questions and more as they explore seeds of all sizes and shapes. Take a moment to consider that flour is made from wheat seeds, that the largest coconuts can weigh as much as forty pounds, or that tiny dandelion and milkweed seeds have their own "parachutes" to carry them on the wind. You're sure to agree that there is much to be learned from the diverse world of seeds.

Worms and Decomposers

Did you know that there can be as many as a million earthworms living under an acre of undeveloped land? Worms and other decomposers are a critical link in the natural pyramid, returning nutrients to the soil, which in turn support plant growth. Students investigate a vermicomposting bin, and have the opportunity to study a population of Red Wiggler earthworms.

Ecosystems and Climate Zones

A greenhouse conservatory provides the perfect setting to explore the concepts of ecosystem and climate zone. Do you imagine that all deserts are hot? If so, why is Antarctica considered to be a desert? Do you know what differentiates tropical from subtropical regions of the earth? What part of the United States contains a rain forest? Students are invited to explore non-native plants while learning about the average temperatures and precipitation common to the regions where these plants live.

The Water Cycle and pollution prevention

Did you know that the same water that we drink today was around when dinosaurs walked the earth? From rain drop to reservoir students in grades 4 and 5 dive in to the water cycle. What does cutting your lawn, walking your dog and washing your car have in common? All of these actions could have negative effects on the quality of our water. By viewing a model of a watershed and adding "pollutants" students can witness how water travels from the storm drain on your street all the way to the ocean.

The Learning Landscape Nature Journal

Every student who visits the Learning Landscape is provided with a journaling tool that can be used either at school or at home to review and apply the concepts that they learned on their field trip. Students are encouraged to observe the natural world around them, and record what they see, both in pictures and words.

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND'S
LEARNING LANDSCAPE

Call the URI CELS Outreach Center at 874-2900 for information.
We hope to see *YOU* in the Learning Landscape!