



## EERC

### March 25, 2020 Newsletter

*“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature – the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter.” – Rachel Carson*

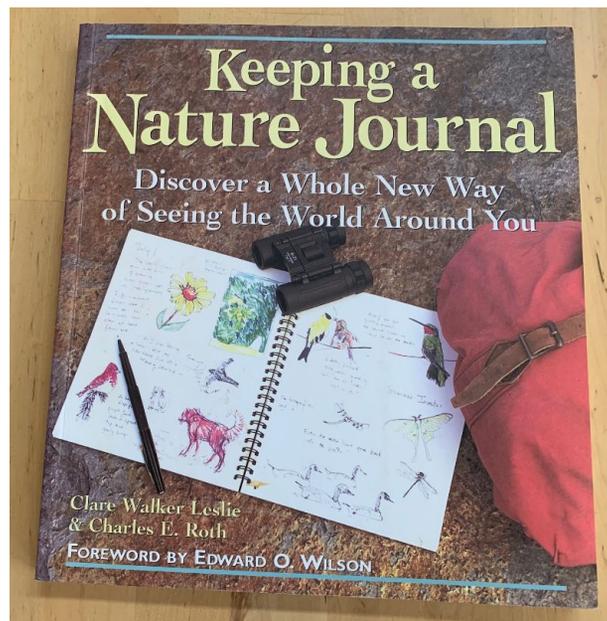


Dear community members,

We hope you are well and finding ways to cope in these challenging times. The near shut down of our communities and new practices of social distancing are taking a lot of getting used to and may feel downright isolating. In the upcoming weeks, while we are being asked to stick close to home, the Environmental Education and Research Center (EERC) will post weekly newsletters to help keep you and your family stay up to date on *spring* and offer fun and easy activities to support you, and if you are an educator, your students, better get to know nearby nature which surrounds us and our place called home. Each EERC weekly newsletter will contain Natural News and Activities for Families and Educators.



**Natural News:** What's that emerald green shrub with bright, unfurling leaves and greenish-white flowers we're seeing everywhere? You are likely seeing Osoberry, sometimes referred to as Indian Plum, coming into bloom. Osoberry is one of the northwest's earliest native shrubs to leaf out each spring; it is truly a sign of spring when Osoberry displays its flowers, as they gracefully brighten up our landscapes. Osoberry can be found as far north as British Columbia and along the western slopes of the Cascades. Traditionally, Osoberry's fruits were eaten fresh, cooked, or dried by Native Americans. Sarah Verlinde, the UW Bothell Herbarium Collections Manager says "crush the fresh spring leaves in your hand for an easy way to identify Osoberry, they should smell like fresh cut cucumber!" Learn more about *Osoberry* [here](#).



### For Families and Educators Start a Nature Journal

While we are facing many challenges to education and opportunities to wander freely outdoors, there are also many opportunities for discovery and learning just outside your front door or window. Creating a Nature Journal with your family can be a creative way to build observation and discovery skills among your children and students during this time closer to home.

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Waldo Emerson and others were known for keeping nature journals of their observations and discoveries. Helping your child tune into and record some of what they see can help them build science observation skills and identities as scientists.

Any small notebook can serve as a beginning Nature Journal. While abiding to social distancing precautions, ask your kids to gather up their eyes, ears, their journal, a pencil and perhaps a camera phone and step outside your front door to see what you can see, hear what you can hear, and smell what you can smell in nature. As a start, ask your children to identify several things that interest them. These may be new leaves, buds, blossoms, new flowers poking up from the ground, new bird songs in the air. Pose prompting questions to deepen inquiry such as asking what about your kid's discoveries interests them? Have your children record the day, time, general weather and their observations in their Nature Journal. Try to build a practice of getting outside, observing nature and making an entry into your Nature Journal daily.

You may wish to visit INaturalist, <https://www.inaturalist.org/> and download the INaturalist App to your phone to help identify unknown plants.

For teachers, Project Learning Tree's Nature Journaling Activity expands on these ideas and offers numerous resources for learning extensions. <https://www.plt.org/educator-tips/nature-journaling-ideas/>

Creating a Nature Journal supports science practices of observation and asking questions; science cross cutting concepts of patterns; and science topics of habitats, life cycles, and biodiversity.

Help the EERC track the signs of spring you and your students have identified by uploading your sightings and photos to the EERC's Facebook Page.

### **Help the EERC Grow**

Please forward our newsletter to your friends, family and colleagues.

**Visit us and add your pictures and experiences of St. Edward State Park on the EERC's Face Book and Instagram.**

[CLICK HERE TO JOIN OUR MAILING LIST](#)

*The EERC's Community-Informed Vision, Mission, and Program Framework*

***Vision*** - *The EERC is a living laboratory where experience transforms learning and stewardship takes root.*

***Mission*** - *The EERC provides integrated environmental education and research experiences to broad and diverse communities with the purpose of*

**Programming** - EERC's programming will be targeted to support three distinct yet overlapping interest areas identified by the community.

- Community, Youth and Family Outreach and Interpretation Programs
- Community K-12 School Partnered Programs
- Community Engaged Science Research and Monitoring Programs



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