



Wednesdays in the Woods Activity: Forest Museums

Materials Needed:

- Writing utensil, small pieces of paper for making display cards
- Hand lens (optional)
- Clear plastic containers, jars, egg cartons or bandanas for collecting and organizing items from outdoors (optional)
- A field guide to research found objects (optional)

Instructions:

1. Go outdoors and spend some time looking for objects that interest you. Use your senses to make observations.
2. Collect interesting objects and arrange them into one or several indoor or outdoor exhibits with similarly themed objects. For example, you might have a “decomposing wood” exhibit or a “squirrel food” exhibit. Use small pieces of paper and a writing utensil to make display labels for your exhibits. You might include a title, a description of where you found the objects, and what the objects are made of.
3. If you are curious about the scientific names, practical uses, or other details about your objects, use a field guide, or ask a household expert about them. It’s okay not to know anything about your objects!
4. Invite others in your household to tour your museum. If you made an indoor display, remember to return items outdoors once you are finished displaying your exhibits.

Reflective Questions:

- How did you choose titles for your exhibits? What details did you choose to include on each display card?

- Which of your exhibits was a “traveling exhibit;” that is, which exhibits contained materials from a different habitat than the forest? How do you think these items moved from their original habitat to the forest?
- How is your forest museum similar to or different from other museums you have attended?

Extensions of this activity:

- Invent descriptive names for your objects. Take away the labels from your exhibits, and ask your museum visitors what they would name the objects based on their observations.
- Go to a different habitat, like a beach or streamside, and make a museum there. You could even make a museum from items in your house!
- Create a field guide or brochure for your museum with descriptions of the exhibits.

Sample forest museum



Photo by Hannah Raymond