

OFFICIAL NATURE NERD

May—June Outdoor Report 2025

Stewardship, Conservation, & Wellness



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WELLNESS. THROUGH. SERVICE.



**May is
Mental Health Awareness Month**

JUNE is Men's Health and PTSD Awareness Month

SUICIDE PREVENTION -

Send text to 988

Or call - 1 (800) 273 - 8255

VETERANS CRISIS LINE 1 (800) 273-8255

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

call SAMHSA @ 1 (800) 662 - 4357

Crisis hotline – text HOME to 741741



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WELLNESS. THROUGH. SERVICE.

Nature fosters:

Stress Reduction | Improved Mood | Lower
Blood Pressure | Sense of Belonging

Acts of Service Create:

Stress Reduction | Improved Mood | Lower
Blood Pressure | Sense of Belonging

do good.
feel good.
be good.

photo by yieldcamp

Poison Ivy, Poison Oak and Poison Sumac

To identify, look at their appearance:



Poison ivy has three leaflets on each leaf and grows as a bush or vine.



Poison oak has three leaflets on each leaf, with rounded tips, and grows like a shrub or vine.



Poison sumac leaves have clusters of seven to 13 leaflets arranged in pairs and grows as a tree.



(Common Ivy, European Ivy, Ivy)



English Ivy (*Hedera Helix*) - non-native invasive species

English Ivy

Brought to America in 1727.

Still sold in nurseries and garden centers throughout MD and the U.S. despite its environmental damage.

Some believe English Ivy was imported to be used as lashings (rope) to bind wood for boats, furniture and houses due to its fast growth and high tensile strength.

English Ivy Removal Tips

Best Practices and Methods



Folding hand saws are the **BEST** tool for removing large vines .



Pry bars, screw drivers and even spoons are ideal for smaller vines against the trunk and in the grooves of the bark.

WINDOW CUTS



“Window cuts” are the preferred method for Ivy management and maintenance. Cut vines at both eye level and at knee level, making a straight line through the vines all the way around the tree. Use pry-tool to help pull vines off the tree at the point where the two connect. Clean up area to expose and reveal “window”.



fun fact: there are no "weeds" in nature.

native and non native invasive
flora (plants) were initially used as
culinary and medicinal superfoods
or as ornamental ground cover.

what does this tell us?



the things we cherished at the
beginning of our journey get forgotten
as we begin to succeed and thrive.



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invasive plants where once desired



this is not a weed,
it's a superfood.

thought to be brought by
early settlers as both a
culinary and medicinal staple.

Purple Dead Nettle is in the
mint family and can be used in
soups, stews, salads and more.

uses include insect bite
treatment, allergy medicine,
antifungal/bacterial,
diuretics and more.



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invasive plants where once desired



this is not a weed,
it's a superfood.

wild onion & meadow garlic
are widely available in nature
and generally safe to eat.

the familiar smell of onion
or garlic will help distinguish
from toxic lookalikes.

they're also high in vitamins,
minerals and antioxidants.



invasive plants where once desired



this is not a weed,
it's a superfood.

the Broadleaf Plantain was
first brought to America in the
1600s because early English
settlers weren't sure what
vegetation, if any, they'd find.

all parts of the plant are
edible with some parts more
ideal for certain dishes.

Natives called it "white man's
foot" because it was foreign
to the land and meant that
Europeans had been there.





**** Tree killer ****

Introduced to MD in 2003

Leaves a distinctive pattern on the inner bark.
Depending on the size of the infestation they can
take anywhere from 2 - 5 years to kill a tree.
On rare occasions its been spotted on trees other
than ash throughout the region.

EAB

(Emerald Ash Borer)

Identification and Management

- EAB, Gypsy moths, Asian longhorn beetles and chestnut blight are just a few of the invasive species that can hide in firewood.
- Do Not bring wood into the forest. Buy or collect wood at your location.

Making Treatment Decisions

Emerald ash borer will kill all ash trees that are not protected with insecticide. Dead and dying ash trees can be dangerous when they fall on people and property—especially in urban areas. Simply ignoring the ash trees will pose great safety risks. Use the [EAB decision making guide \(pdf\)](#) to guide you through the decision making process.

Save or remove?

Before you decide, consider:

- ✓ **Tree health.** Trees that have lost more than 30% of their canopy should not be saved with insecticides because too much of the tree is already dead.



Photo credit: Cliff Sadoff

- ✓ **Tree location.** Remove trees that are likely to encounter obstacles as it grows (power lines, buildings, etc.). Save trees planted where they are likely to thrive and provide a service to the community.

Biological Control

Three species of small, stingless wasps are being used to control EAB throughout Indiana and the US. These wasps kill large percentages of EAB in their native range in Asia. All wasps have been thoroughly tested to ensure that they will not attack native insects. It is unlikely that these wasps alone will eradicate EAB, but they help protect ash trees growing from seedlings in the forest. Although more wasps are reared every year, they are only given to professionals for release to ensure that they have the best chance for success.

Don't Move Firewood

Develop a local disposal plan when removing dead and dying ash tree. On its own, EAB can only move about half-a-mile per year but can spread across the country in a matter of days with human help.

EAB isn't the only pest that hides in firewood: both native and invasive pests can hitch a ride inside loads of wood and some were spread even before they were identified as problems. Gypsy moths, Asian longhorned beetles, and chestnut blight are just a few of the invasive species that can hide inside firewood.



BOX TREE MOTH

First spotted in New York in 2021

Last seen headed west and last spotted in Ohio.



Box tree moth is an invasive pest that can significantly damage and potentially kill boxwood (*Buxus* species) plants if left unchecked. The caterpillars are ravenous feeders, and heavy infestations can completely defoliate host plants. After the leaves are gone, they feed on the bark which eventually kills the plant. Boxwoods are a popular ornamental evergreen shrub common to many landscape environments in the United States.

The moth is native to East Asia and has become a prolific pest in Europe. In 2021, APHIS confirmed box tree moth in New York, and since then it has been confirmed in Michigan and Ohio. The moths are highly mobile and good fliers.

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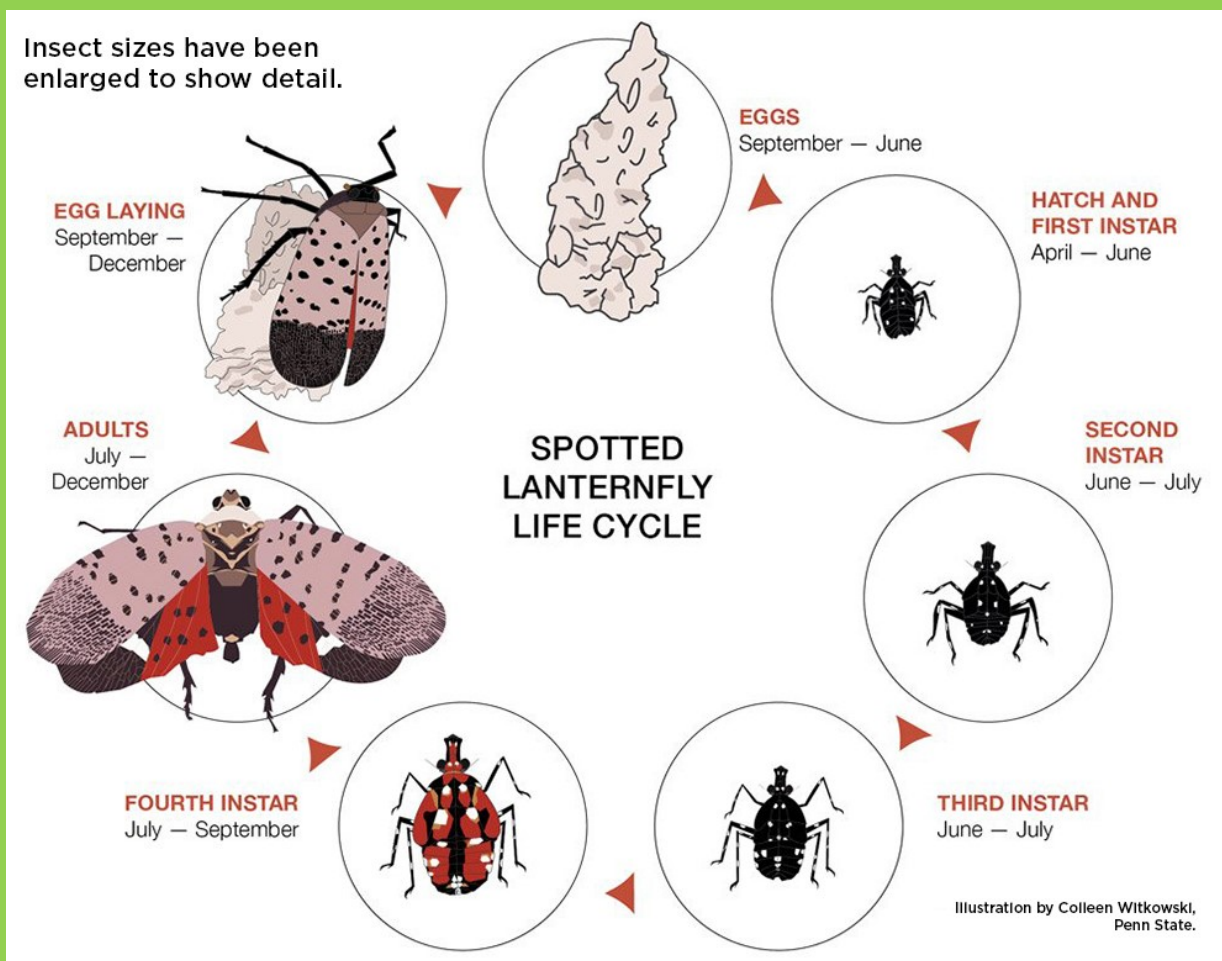


Spotted lanternfly

Harmless to humans but detrimental to the environment

MD-DNR and Environmental experts say to

KILL ON SIGHT!!!



Nature Therapy

NATURE & STRESS

Science has proven that:

- Just looking at pictures of the forest , the ocean, rivers or trees can help reduce stress on a chemical level within the body.
- Many, if not all, birds sing at 432hz which has been proven to be the frequency that increases a person's mental clarity and perception as well as unlock intuition, reduce blood pressure, slow down heart rates and reduce anxiety.
- Scratching the dirt with a stick before you sit will stir up microbes in the soil that boost serotonin production and norepinephrine when inhaled.
- Trees release Phytoncides which increase the activity of tumor killing cells called NK cells.



HIKING FOR HEALTH

We all know that:

- Hiking releases endorphins that improve mood.
 - Hiking helps lose weight
- Hiking builds all muscles including the heart.

But did you know that:

- Hiking boosts bone density?
- Hiking lowers diabetes and blood pressure?
- Hiking can help boost self esteem
 - Hiking is FREE!!!



Trash & debris pickup IS not only good for nature:

It's good for exercise.

It's good for immersion.

It boosts self esteem.



Benefits of Nature:

Reduce stress and anxiety. Improve mood.
Creates sense of belonging. Exercise.



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Benefits of Volunteering:

Reduce stress and anxiety. Improve mood.
Creates sense of belonging. Exercise.

do good.
feel good.
be good.

NATURE INTERPRETATION

Knowing information and facts about nature can create meaningful and true interpretation opportunities that will help foster connection.

Every plant on the planet is either a tree, bush/shrub, vine or herb and a healthy forest contains all 4.
#message

	Who's a part of your healthy forest?
 Trees Provision Authority	_____
 Bushes/Shrubs Protection Safety	_____
 Vines Restriction Correction	_____
 Herbs Nourishment Nurturing	_____

identifying these roles in your team, family or friend group is essential.

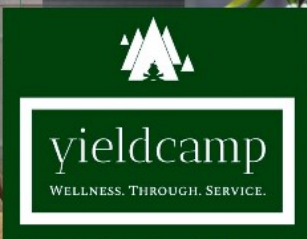
knowing which one you are helps clarify your role.



Creation Informed Care extracts life lessons, therapies and wisdom from the natural environment that can be applied to everyday situations plus studied, developed and codified into sustainable strategies and personal philosophies.

a good staff supports the mission every step of the way

a good board assists with planning, preparation and presentation



modeling your organization after nature
wood be a good idea

do good.
feel good.
be good.

Similes and metaphors are great ways to build strong connections and interpretations.

PLAN YOUR PLANT

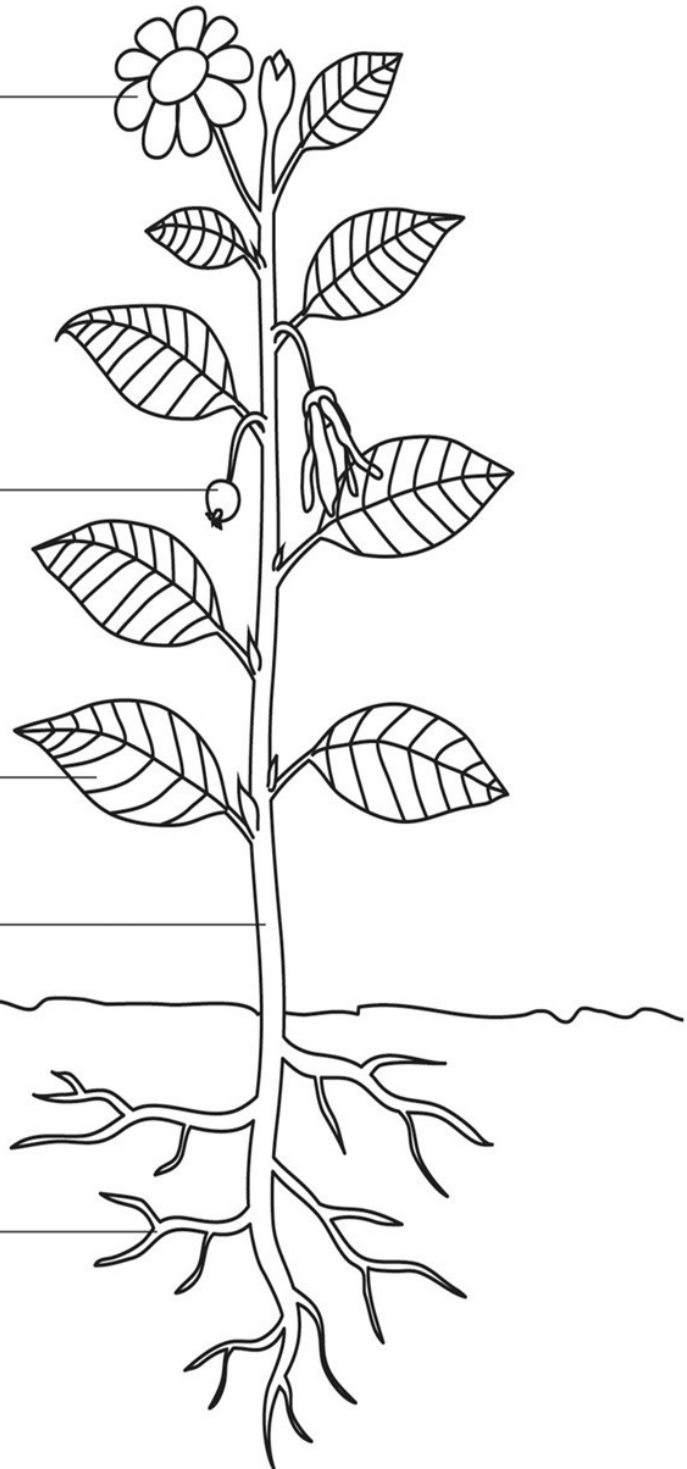
PRODUCT, SERVICE
OR GOAL

MAIN IDEA, THOUGHT
OR THESIS

WHAT SETS YOU APART?

WHAT IS YOUR MISSION
OR PURPOSE?

WHAT ARE YOUR CORE
VALUES OR MAIN
POINTS?



Outdoor Exploration and Adventure BEST PRACTICES

NATURE NEWBIE CHECKLIST



1. Never step **ON** anything that you can step **OVER**.
2. When looking under logs, roll them towards you, not away.
3. Add water, bug spray and a whistle to your first aid kit.
4. Make sure your cell phone is fully charged.
5. Make sure someone knows where you are and for how long.
6. Remove ear buds and be aware of your surroundings.
7. Where possible, use maps when hiking in a new area.

EASY WAYS TO GET INTO NATURE

- *Take a walk* in your neighborhood. Believe it or not, when you step outside you are in nature.
- *Have a picnic in the park* with family and friends. A quick and easy way to get nature immersion.
- *Fly a kite*. Exercise while in nature multiplies nature's impact. And it takes work to fly a kite.
- *Pick up trash*. If running around to get a kite in the air is too much, try this, it'll pick up your mood too.
- *Go fish*. No really, go fishing. Now you're adding meditation and the impact of water with immersion.
- *Build and hang a bird house*. You will engage creativity as well as foster feelings of belonging and joy.
- *Take pictures* of trees, flowers and nature. Studies show that simply viewing nature photos is healing.

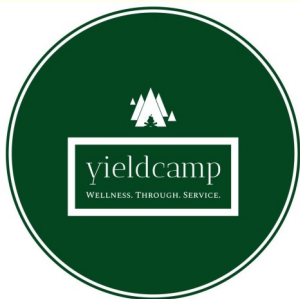
Awarenesses and Observations in MAY



Walking in nature eliminates Stress & Anxiety

NATIONAL WALKING MONTH

- Nature, in all forms, can reduce blood pressure.
 - Nature immersion increases (NK) cells
 - Soil microbes can elevate serotonin
- Just 20 minutes in nature can significantly reduce one's level of cortisol.
- Getting direct sunlight on your face and skin is vitally important to the body's natural ability to fight and eliminate stress.
- Nature exposure helps us to be present in the moment which distances us from our stress.



Minority Health Disparities

Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) are more likely to suffer with a wide range of physical and mental challenges.

BIPOC also struggle to receive adequate and accurate care and evaluations.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Regular outside time can help to reduce stress and hypertension as well as blood pressure.

Nature exposure and immersion can help to improve emotional regulation.

The sensory input imbalance experienced by autism can actually help to increase and foster a deeper connection with nature.

Nature exposure and immersion for those new to the outdoors can be challenging but if a connection is able to be made then progress is sure to follow.

MARYLAND WORD SEARCH

S H I N I N G S U M A C
E S U I E A Y T U M H T
A A T N B V Y V E I E D
W R U E A U X Q U I S N
I T M S Y R E A M N A A
R Q N I A C A D E M Y L
A C R A B S G I R D E Y
V O Y S T E L S A X A R
E W A T E R S H E D K A
N R E E F O M R I D E M
S J Z G B U K F L A G W

SEA
SHING SUMAC
OYSTERS
STREAM
BOSS

REEF
WATERSHED
FREE
EARTH
BAY

ACADEMY
AUTUMN
MARYLAND
NAVY
CRABS

RAVENS
EAGLE
VINES
NATURE
FLAG

Studies show that Acts of Kindness are:

- * linked to increased feelings of well-being
- * linked to Improved self-esteem
- * able to boost feelings of confidence



do good.
feel good.
be good.

Your gear is what you take with you
on every journey.



So, check your G.E.A.R.
before you go...

Gratitude for Errors, Anguish and Regret

Every cloud has a silver lining, even your
darkest. Thanking the bad for the good
it gave can begin to take away the pain.



Leave No Trace & Relevant Life Lessons

PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

BE ORGANIZED

HIKE AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES

BE IN ACCORDANCE

DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

BE A GOOD STEWARD

LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

BE A PRODUCER NOT A CONSUMER

MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS

BE WISE

RESPECT WILDLIFE

BE COMPASSIONATE

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS

BE RESPECTFUL