



Don't get stuck indoors for hours and hours during Thanksgiving break. Step outside for some of these fresh-air activities. And invite family and friends to join you!

giving Fun

BY LUISE WOELFLEIN



2 THANKFUL SPELLING

Spell out "THANKS" or "THANK YOU" using natural objects. Find fallen twigs and leaves, rocks, and other natural things that look like the different letters you need. Then lay the "letters" side by side to spell a word. Having trouble finding a particular letter? Shape the letter by using sticks. Or use things that start with the letter. For example, you might make an "A" with acorns.

1 CRITTER DECORATIONS

Gather acorns, pine or spruce cones, sweet-gum pods, or other plant parts. Then glue them together to create your own animal characters such as the pine-cone turkey **above**. Arrange your creatures around your holiday feast or put one by each person's place at the table. For more examples and instructions, visit rangerrick.org/seedpodcritters.

3 SHADES OF NATURE

For this activity, you will need some paint-color cards. You can get these for free at your local hardware or paint store. Select a variety of autumn colors—different reds, browns, yellows, and oranges—as well as a few colors that you think may be harder to find in nature, such as purple and pink. Go on a hunt outside to find things that closely match the shades of color on the paint cards.

4 "THANKS" SCAVENGER HUNT

Go on a hunt to find things in each of these categories:

TREE LEAVES

How many different types can you find? Can you match the leaves to the trees they fell from?

HOLES

Look for holes made by animals. Check tree trunks, the ground, logs lying on the ground, and fallen tree nuts. If you find holes in trees, return in spring to see if anything new has come to nest!

ANIMALS

What kinds of birds can you spot at Thanksgiving time where you live? What insects are active? What other animals are out and about? Keep a list of what you see each year around this time.

NIBBLING

Who's been munching plants in your neighborhood? Look at leaves and twigs for signs of eating. Can you figure out what animals may have done the snacking? What other signs of nibbling can you find?

KNOBBINESS

What natural "bumps" can you find? Look for trees that have big, rounded, knotty growths called *burls* on their trunks. And see if you can spot tree trunks covered in bumpy fungus. Even a tree that twisted as it grew can count as "knobby." Don't forget to look for leaves with raised bumps where insects or mites may have lived or laid their eggs.

SEEDS

How many different kinds of seeds and seed pods can you find?

5 WALK-AND-POSE

Work off your Thanksgiving meal by walking around the neighborhood with your dinner guests. As you walk, take turns inventing your own poses that mimic natural things you see. Become a leaf pile, a spruce tree, a watchful squirrel, a flowing stream, or a flying crow!



6 SCULPTURE GARDEN

Create your own outdoor sculpture to express your appreciation of nature's special beauty. You can use seeds, rocks, leaves, branches, and other natural objects to construct a design you like, an animal shape, or other sculpture. Have family and friends make their own sculptures, too, and then take a "sculpture garden" walk through all the creations.

GREEN HOUR

SHOW US!



We'd love to see photos of your natural sculptures and messages. Send your favorites to rick@nwf.org or mail them to

Thanksgiving Fun
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We may publish a small selection of photos in a future issue.

We enjoy seeing photos from our readers. We're sorry that there's room to print only some of them. All submissions become the property of the National Wildlife Federation.