

# Boston Nature Center

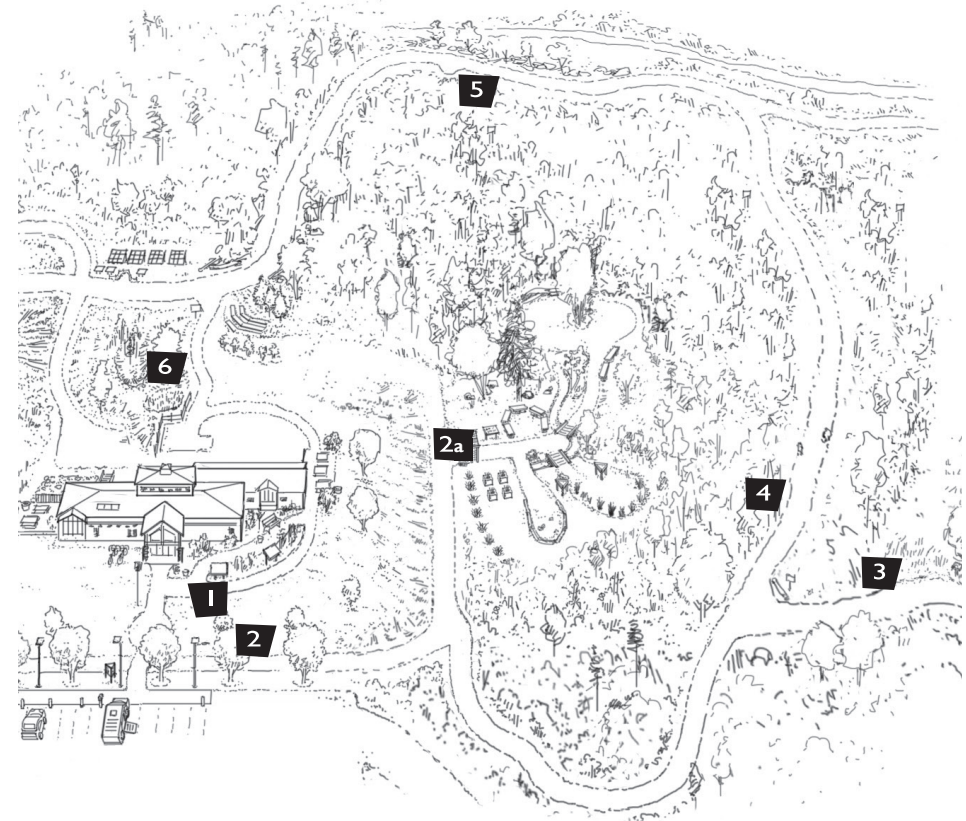


## Sensory Trail Young Explorers

April to November



## Sensory Trail



- 1** Monarchs and Milkweed
- 2** Generations of Sugar Maples
- 2a** The Nature Nook
- 3** Wetland Wonders
- 4** Home in a Tree
- 5** Rockberry Rocks
- 6** A Pond Study



# 1 Monarchs and Milkweed

A home is a place where you get what you need to live. What do you need to live? Think about it for a moment. You need to eat food and drink water. You also need a warm, dry place to go when the weather's cold and wet. That dry place is called shelter. Animals get what they need in their homes, too. We call their homes habitats. You're in a special habitat right now: the butterfly garden. All the plants in this garden were planted because they provide food and shelter for—you guessed it—butterflies!

# 2 Generations of Sugar Maples

You are standing in front of a row of giant plants...sugar maple trees! That's right, trees are giant plants that are alive and need to get what they need to live from their habitat too. What do trees need to live? If you were thinking soil, water, and sunlight, you're right! If these trees get everything they need, they give us something back in return. What would a sugar maple tree give to us? If you were thinking oxygen and delicious maple syrup, you were right again! So, next time you're enjoying yummy pancakes or waffles covered in maple syrup you can thank sugar maple trees!

Draw one of the patterns or do a rubbing of a leaf or the bark of a tree:



Simply place paper over object and rub paper lightly with pencil

# 2a Nature Nook

Join in the fun at the Nature Nook. Look around to see all of the different areas to play. Meet new friends in this natural play space.

- 👉 Dig in the dirt and add water to make mud pies.
- 👉 Be like a bird and make a nest.
- 👉 Create your own shelter or other structure.
- 👉 Climb on the logs like an animal, balance on the stump jump.
- 👉 Perform on the stage and play a gentle tune on the akambira.
- 👉 Use your imagination by acting like animals you see at the Boston Nature Center.

What do you notice about the plants? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Can you find the American smoketree or the Japanese weeping cherry tree? \_\_\_\_\_

How would you describe them? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How does the puff of smoke feel? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Discover and explore the trails leading into the woods.

You just walked through a habitat called a forest. In front of you is another kind of habitat called a wetland. How is the wetland different from the forest? Maybe you noticed there aren't any big trees living in the wetland. That's because the ground is wet and squishy. When it rains a lot and water levels are high, wetlands fill with water like a sponge and trap things that are bad for animals like pollutants. If you look carefully you might be able to see the soft, fuzzy tips of cattails. These cattails offer excellent habitat for many animals. Take a moment to listen. Do you hear the "conk-a-REE!" of a red-winged blackbird? These often noisy birds might be nesting nearby. Many animals use wetlands as nurseries for their young. Sit quietly. What other sounds can you hear?

### Sounds that I hear



What

Where


Is there life under this log? Let's find out! Go ahead and roll over one of the logs on this trail. How does the soil feel... is it moist or dry? Are there any centipedes scurrying away? Logs may not seem very important, but they provide a home for some important creepy crawlies called decomposers. These special organisms eat and break down dead plants and animals. Some of them are even eating these logs! Why should we care? Decomposers make compost that helps plants to grow. Without them, the plants and trees around you wouldn't be here!

Wow, here's a huge piece of rock that's called Roxbury puddingstone. Roxbury puddingstone is a type of rock that can only be found here in Massachusetts. Reach out and touch the rock. How does it feel? Though rocks aren't alive, they play a very important role in nature. Can you think of how a rock might help a plant or an animal? Maybe this big rock could offer protection to a plant from wind, rain, or snow. This rock might also provide shelter for critters such as chipmunks, snakes, or insects.

Can you think of any other ways this rock might be useful in nature?

Are ponds alive? In every season, you can always find something living in this pond. Feel the long leaves of a cattail plant that is growing out of the mud. Can you figure out why it has such a funny name? Some people think that the long, brown, flower spikes look like a cat's tail. What do you think? Listen again for the loud alarm call of red-winged blackbirds. In the spring, they love to build their nests in the cattails, and if you get too close, they might swoop down and remind you to be careful!

From insects to birds, plants to frogs, ponds are homes to so many living things. What do you notice in the pond?

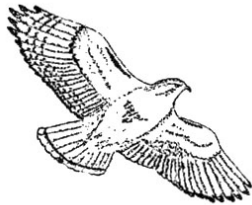
### Scavenger Hunt - Circle What You Saw



A Mammal



An Amphibian



A Bird



An Insect

This is the end of your sensory trail visit. You can enter the nature center through the back of the building or revisit your favorite stop (maybe the Nature Nook).

### Conclusion

We hope you enjoyed learning about the interesting plants and animals that find their food, water, and shelter at the Boston Nature Center. Please come back soon to explore more!

# Boston Nature Center

500 Walk Hill Street  
Mattapan, MA 02126  
617-983-8500  
bnc@massaudubon.org

### Nature Center

Monday through Friday, 9am to 5pm, Saturday, Sunday,  
and Monday holidays, 10am to 4pm

### Trails

Open daily dawn to dusk.

Mass Audubon works to protect the nature of Massachusetts for people and wildlife. Together with more than 100,000 members, we care for 35,000 acres of conservation land, provide school, camp, and other educational programs for 225,000 children and adults annually, and advocate for sound environmental policies at local, state, and federal levels. Founded in 1896 by two inspirational women who were committed to the protection of birds, Mass Audubon has grown to become a powerful force for conservation in New England. Today we are respected for our sound science, successful advocacy, and innovative approaches to connecting people and nature. Each year, our statewide network of wildlife sanctuaries welcomes nearly half a million visitors of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds and serves as the base for our work. To support these important efforts, call 800-AUDUBON (800-283-8266) or visit [www.massaudubon.org](http://www.massaudubon.org).



Mass Audubon  
*Protecting the Nature of Massachusetts*