

Nature Buddies
Suggested List of Forest 'Secret' Creatures / Objects

BATS

Mystery Mailbox Objects: mummified bat, fruit, nighttime image eg. full moon, bat house, bat mask
Outdoor Activities: Look for bat habitat such as caves, overhangs, crevices in Douglas-fir trees
Story: Stلالuna

DEER

Mystery Mailbox Objects: antlers, deer skull, deer droppings, deer fur, nibbled plants
Outdoor Activities: Look for evidence such as poo and bones, follow the deer trail, walk like a deer (silently)
Story: Forest Adventures – Story-time Treasury by Smithsonian Institution

MUSHROOMS

Mystery Mailbox Objects: spore print, rotting log, damp earth, moss, lichen, mushrooms, mycelium (fungal threads), mushroom parts – cap, stalk, gills
Outdoor Activities: play mushroom yag – 'it' tags people who become mushrooms and cannot move until touched by another untagged player; find mushrooms and collect mushroom - compare colours and sizes; take one home to do a spore print
Story: A Log's Life by Wendy Pfeffer

OWLS

Mystery Mailbox Objects: Owl pellet, owl feather, bird skull, bird nest, egg shell, owl photos (species-at-risk), owl calls, boiled egg
Outdoor Activities: look for owl homes
Story: The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark

RACCOONS

Mystery Mailbox Objects: mask, garbage/compost, paw prints, bark with a hole, raccoon skull
Outdoor Activities: put on racoon masks and look for racoon habitat
Story: Forest Adventures – Story-time Treasury by Smithsonian Institution

SNAILS AND SLUGS

Mystery Mailbox Objects: Snail shells, maple leaf, rotten log, slime, laminated photos, slug eggs
Outdoor Activities: Look for snails and slugs
Story: Some Smug Slug

SPIDERS

Mystery Mailbox Objects: Spider web, spider in a jar, bugs eaten by spider, 8 eyes
Outdoor Activities: look for webs and spiders
Story: A House Spider's Life

SQUIRRELS

Mystery Mailbox Objects: acorns, leaves, Douglas-fir cone, chewed cones, hollow branch, hazelnuts, forked branch (nesting area)
Outdoor Activities: look for evidence of creature (eaten fir cones); Squirrel Scavenger Hunt: hide hazelnuts along the trail for the kids to find; eat hazelnuts and leave some as a squirrel offering

Story: Forest Adventures – Story-time Treasury by Smithsonian Institution

TREES

Mystery Mailbox Objects: potted tree, acorn, many different types of leaves, different types of cones, branches, different types of bark

Outdoor Activities: look at different types of trees; plant a tree; leaf imprints

Story: A Log's Life by Wendy Pfeffer; Up in a Tree by Margaret Atwood

The focus of the trees/plants can be adapted to the season ie. Buds bursting in spring or leaves falling in autums.

ROCKS (and CRYSTALS)

Mystery Mailbox Objects: all types of rocks and crystals

Outdoor Activities: find a special rock; build a circle of rocks and build a campfire

Story: A Rock Is Lively by Aston / Long

BUTTERFLIES (and CATERPILLARS)

Mystery Mailbox Objects: dead butterfly, butterfly foods (nodding onion, pearly everlasting, stonecrop, bleeding heart, strawberry), caterpillar, cocoon, proboscis (straw), eggs on leaf

Outdoor Activities: look for butterfly food and butterflies; Caterpillar to Butterfly Game – climb into the ‘cocoon’ as a caterpillar and come out the other side as a butterfly; look for things eaten by caterpillars

Story: The Very Hungry Caterpillar

EAGLES

Mystery Mailbox Objects: Bird Skull, Feathers, Nests, Bird Poop, Egg, Eagle Nest Map of your area,

Outdoor Activities: Look potential eagle trees, build a nest, bird watching with binoculars

Story: Bald Eaglets

FROGS

Mystery Mailbox Objects: mud, algae, tree stuff, frogs eggs, tadpole, water

Outdoor Activities: Leap Frog, look in a bucket of pond water

Story: Ah ha! By Jeff Mack *and* Peek at the Pond

BEEES

Mystery Mailbox Objects: honey, bee nest, mason bee house, mud, bee food (potted plants if possible), pollen

Outdoor Activities: look for bees and bee food; Game of Pollination – run from flower to flower and act like bees; The Bee Dance (describe the way a bee communicates then mimic it)

Story:

WORMS

Mystery Mailbox Objects: dirt, worm castings, compost, live worms

Outdoor Activities: look for worms

Story: A Worm's Life by John Himmelman