

# December 2018

## Volume 1, Issue 11

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New South Wales  
Christmas Bush ~  
*Ceratopetalum gummiferum*

Nature Study Australia

# Summer

Nature Science for Aussie Families

## *Merry Christmas!*

Summer has arrived with the joyous ringing of cicada carillons and the Christmas blossoms of the [Silky Oak](#) where Honeyeaters, Wattlebirds, Lorikeets and Possums squabble over the bounty of nectar produced by this tree.

The [Christmas Bush's](#) flushed, rosy blooms holler Merry Christmas as birds, bees and butterflies devour its nectar.

Industrious Christmas spiders build webs to attract tiny insects to ingest while deterring birds from gobbling them up with their impressive spines.

Christmas beetles join the pageant as they emerge from the depths in the ground to flutter around night lights and Tea Tree flowers attract thousands of Jewel beetles and butterflies.

The [Red-capped Robin](#) celebrates the season in the Eucalyptus and Cypress Pine woodlands while the assiduous [Mistletoe bird](#) pollinates the Mistletoe, a parasitic plant, by moving seeds from the branches of one plant to another.

Christmas Tree Worms decorate coral reefs while millions of baby red crabs flood Christmas Island.

Celebrate the season by going wild and delighting in natural experiences while exploring the beauty of creation. Take the time to observe the flowering plants and the hectic, yet peaceful life of all creatures rejoicing in summer while focusing on the reason for the season ~ The Gift of Jesus.

Merry Christmas!

Some Interesting Christmas Reading:

[Australia is the real home of mistletoe | Australian Geographic](#)

[Where have all the Christmas Beetles gone? | Australian Museum](#)

[The bright and colourful world of Christmas Tree Worms | Aus. Geog.](#)

[Deck the hall with billions of crabs | Australian Geographic](#)

[Six Aussie Christmas trees better than the Pine | Aus. Geog.](#)

# Pictures of the Month



A bizarre caterpillar pretending to be a leaf. A beautiful shot, Christina. You're a gem for sharing it with us.



The bizarre caterpillar emerges from the pupa a female Wattle Bizarre Looper Moth.



Sally captured an amazing photo of a hairy caterpillar with a macro lens attached to a phone.



A berry beautiful frog was discovered by Tracey's lovely daughter. Thank you, Tracey for letting me share this awesome photo.



Jacob takes a smashing photo of a dragonfly. We enjoy your contributions Jacob. Thank you!

*"A child, more than anyone else, is a spontaneous observer of nature."  
~ Maria Montessori*



A Busy Working Honeybee by Kayla

Jacob walks into a Tiger Snake.



[Nature Science for Aussie Families](#) is a F.B. Group where outdoor mamas share their adventures, explorations and activities to motivate, encourage and support one another. We'd love to have you [come along side us](#) and share in our joy or #naturestudyaustralia on Instagram.

# Show & Tell



Treasures collected and placed inside this gorgeous curiosity case by Marieka.



Di discovers a new hobby dying with natural materials.



Dragonfly nymphs were discovered and investigated by Jo and family.



Treasures found while out walking by Christina.

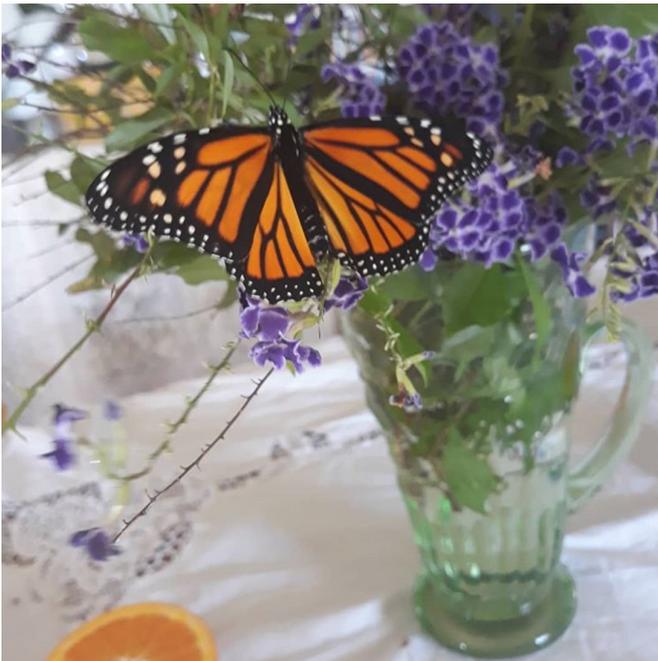


Egg cases from a sea snail (*Dicathais orbita*)



A study of milkweed and the Monarch butterfly was undertaken by Renelle and family.

# Show & Tell



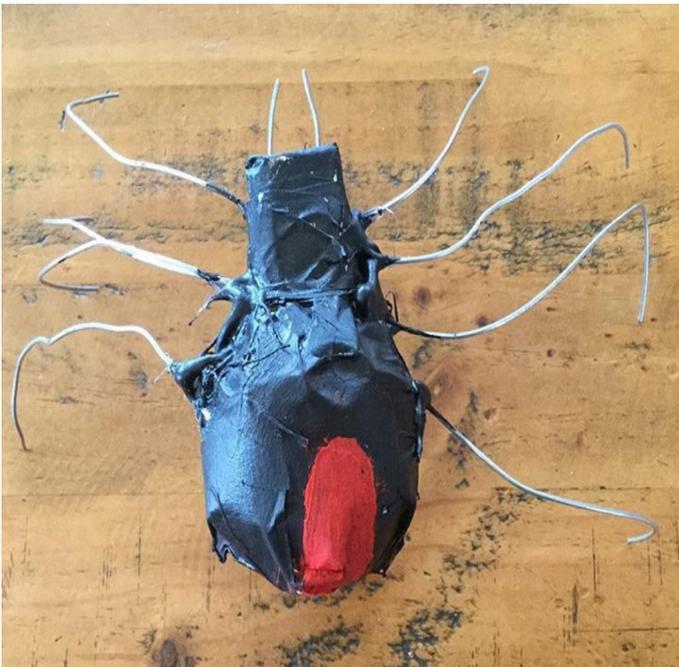
Renelle and family hatch Monarch butterflies.



Maja and family enjoy a snake themed supper after an informative discussion with a Reptile Wrangler.



While on the hunt for dragonflies, Maja and family discover a Water Scorpion.



Mr T molds a Red-back spider sculpture during a Dangerous Spider Lesson.

*"Nature inspires creativity in a child by demanding visualization and full use of the senses."*  
~ Richard Louv



Jo creates an invitation to play and investigate during Snake Week.

# Inspired to Journal



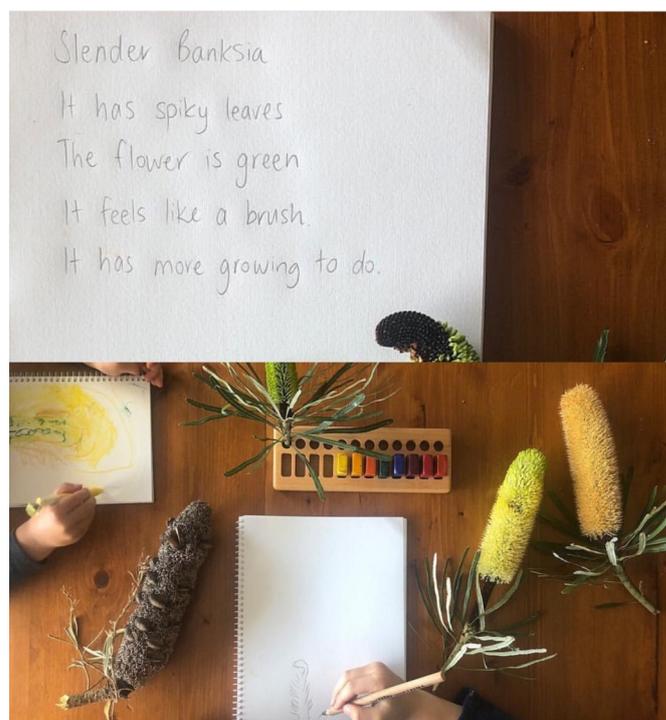
Indoor nature study on lifecycles by Sharon.



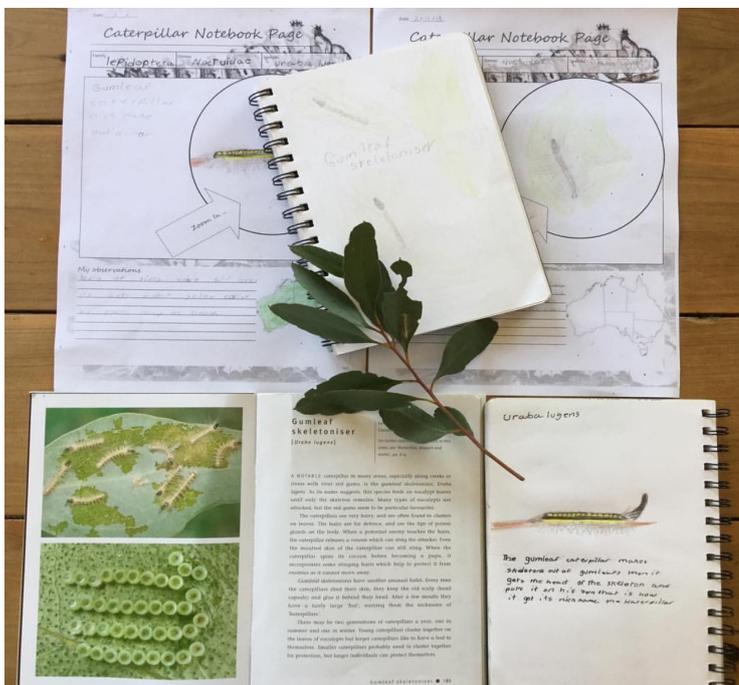
A caterpillar discovery underway with research, nature walks, stories and sketches at Jo's place.



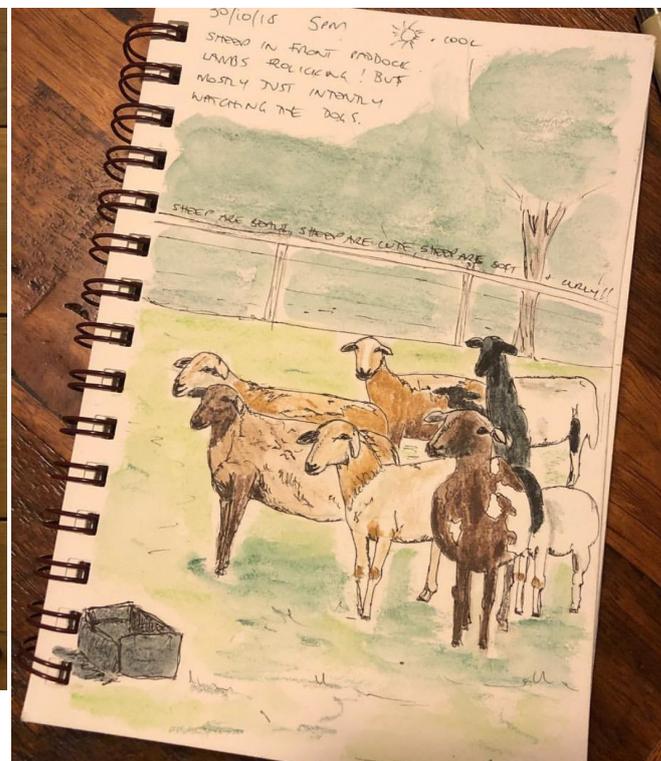
A fun morning was spent soaking up dragonfly information before venturing outdoors in search of them. Several different types of dragonflies and damselflies were discovered and journaled into diaries. Thank you, Belinda for sharing.



Mr 6 dives into a Slender banksia study by observing the different stages of growth while sketching his specimens and making notes. Shared by Tracey.



Smashing caterpillar journaling by Jo's family.



Bee attempts to journal natural moving objects with success.



An opportunity to journal presented itself when a fox broke into a hen house. Poor chooks! Thanks Rebecca for sharing.



During a challenging spider study, Bee and family watched a Grey Wolf spider overcome and devour a large beetle. You wowed and inspired us with this sketch, Bee.



A great sketch labelling a bee's anatomy by Rebecca's precious person.



Jacob journals wildflowers

## Introducing the Australian Nature Study Guide

### Backyard Edition

**Coming January 2019!**

**Step outside and discover**

\* Ants \* Ladybugs \* Grasshoppers

Native Bees \* Summer Flowers \* Grasses

\* Eucalyptus Trees

\* Willy Wag-tails \* Geckos

\* Daddy Long-legs



The Australian Nature Study Guide | Backyard Edition is *family orientated* and *inspires* children to *explore* the outdoors.

It will encourage **OBSERVATION, EXPLORATION, DRAWING, PAINTING, RESEARCHING, WRITING, READING, CREATING, ADVENTURE, DISCOVERIES, COMPARISONS, DISCUSSIONS, EXPLANATIONS, NOTATIONS, NATURE JOURNALING** and **WONDER**.

*Immerse* the children in nature study and learn science the **wild, free** and **fun** way.

*Dip your feet in or dive in*. The choice is yours! There's **no pressure** to do it all. The only requirement is to **enjoy and connect** with nature.

[Join us](#) as we venture into the Aussie backyard this summer and follow natural cycles through the season.

You'll be **surprised** and **inspired** to **capture memories** and knowledge through nature journaling.

*Come along! Adventure awaits.*

## NATURE STUDY GUIDE REVIEWS

"We have really enjoyed the program this term. We have gotten outside more often and the children are definitely taking more notice of things when we are out. Having a place to share what we have done and seen has been an encouragement to keep it up. I sometimes felt like we could spend longer on some topics as they were so interesting but that is probably just my obsessive "we must cover everything now" problem." 😊

~ Sally

"We began our homeschool journey this year keen to explore all that nature study entails. I had searched the web for weeks to research what we would use as our framework. I cannot describe the elation I felt when I came across an AUSTRALIAN nature study guide! Marie has done all the hard work and put together a wonderfully elaborate resource for all ages. You can dip your toe in or dive right into all the ideas and links. There's so much here we could spend all week doing nature study, and often we do." ~ Rachel

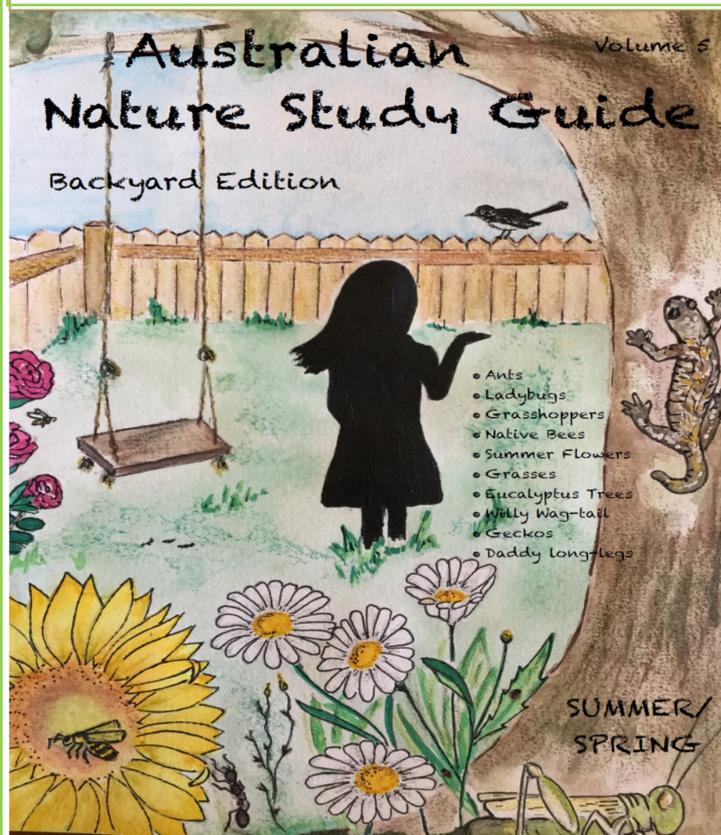
"Absolutely love the activity books. My whole family can learn together and it's Australian based. Highly recommend."

~ Sarah K

"So much exploration! And not enough time to do it all. You can really tailor to your child. Loving it."

~ Sarah R

*Your reviews are appreciated and they help to spread the word and place the Australian Nature Guides into the hands of Aussie nature mums.*



# My Gold Adventure

## LOOKING FOR GOLD AT THE PERTH MINT

Whilst we were in Perth recently, Dad and I visited the Perth Mint. It is the largest fully integrated, innovative precious metal enterprise in Australia and provides premium gold, silver and platinum products and services around the world.

The Perth Mint was opened in 1899 after the discovery of one of the world's most sought after natural resources...**GOLD**. Diggers from all around the world came to Western Australia in the hope of striking it rich. If they were lucky enough to find gold, they would deposit it with the Mint, to be refined and minted into gold coins.

We saw them pouring melted gold into graphite pots called crucibles. These only last about 2 weeks and are then sent to their refinery to extract leftover gold.

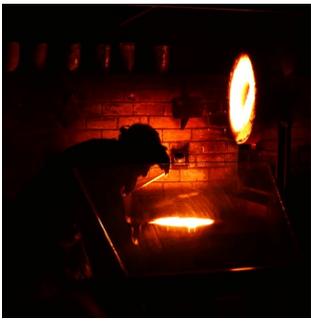
I enjoyed all of the tour, especially watching the gold pour.

There has been a lot of environmental damage over the past 200 years from diggers searching for our precious metals, but it was good to learn that the Perth Mint meets the highest environmental standards. It also has the highest security standards.

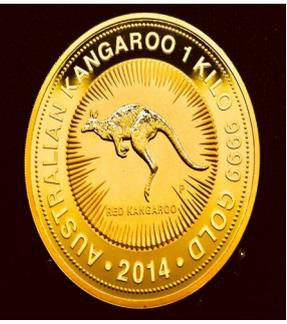
Visiting the Perth Mint was another way of extending our Nature Studies about the precious resources within our world. Gold is a beautiful precious metal, but I hope that the environment is preserved and cared for before, during and after the mining process. I also believe that history is important and that any areas that have historical or other special meaning are not mined, but preserved.



1 Tonne Gold Coin worth \$60 Million



A Gold Pour



A 1KG Gold Coin



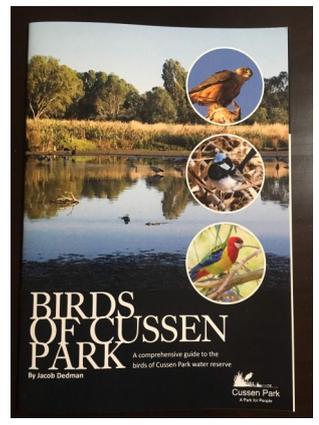
The Perth Mint Building



*Jacob has created Christmas cards and 2019 calendars with his delightful images. Visit his [website](#) and [Facebook Page](#), [Digital Journey Photography](#).*

*This is his project to raise funds for a new camera to enhance his photography skills.*

*Encourage his enthusiasm if you're able. He's bound to do a happy dance with your support :)*



*Jacob is an inspiring young man. He's taken his passion for photography and birds to create a Bird Field Guide for his local Bushland, [Cussen Park](#).*

*Do you have a story to share? [Get in touch!](#) I'd love to feature your project.*

# A Mini Advent Study

Advent is the first event in the Church Calendar and begins four weeks before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. It is a time of preparation and fasting; a season of celebrating 'the wait' and expectation of the coming Jesus Christ. Christmas Day is the joyous celebration of the birth of a Saviour.

It is a season to slow down and reflect upon the Gift of Jesus Christ; a time for gratefulness as we experience all of the awesomeness, beauty and complexity of God's creation.

*"Nature Study as a subject is one which should be approached with great reverence, for in dealing with birds, animals, flower and all forms of natural life, we are perhaps, nearer to the Creator than in any other branch of science; for the natural world is the expression of God's personality in a form that is within reach of all of us to comprehend in some measure. And is not the natural world one of the greatest proofs that there is a God?"*

~ G. Downton | *The Charm of Nature Study* | *The Parent's Review*

*Edited by Charlotte Mason*

I invite you to step out of the hustle and bustle this season and experience the restfulness of the natural world by noticing the blooming flowers heralding Christmas, the ringing bells of cicadas and the dulcet carols of birds.

Prepare natural Christmas gifts to share with loved ones like a potted herb garden, a collection of seeds to encourage butterflies, a bug hotel, a [gumnut bracelet](#) or how about a rose bush or a Silky Oak Christmas tree?

Fill your home with the scent of [natural Christmas decorations](#) like pine cones and branches, gum nuts and [clay nature print ornaments](#), jars of rosemary and berries and a unique [Aussie wreath](#). I've collected a few ideas on my [Pinterest Board](#). Go take a look and be inspired. You may even like to [decorate a tree with treats for the birds](#) in your backyard.

Experience the expression of God's creativity as we prepare for, focus on and celebrate the gift of His Son.

*"If we could condense all the truths of Christmas into only three words, these would be the words: "God with us." We tend to focus our attention at Christmas on the infancy of Christ. The greater truth of the holiday is His deity. More astonishing than a baby in the manger is the truth that this promised baby is the omnipotent Creator of the heavens and the earth!" ~ John MacArthur*

## Bible Readings:

Isaiah 9:6

Luke 2:1-20

## Inspiring Stories:

[The Littlest Watchman by Scott James](#)

Applesauce and the Christmas Miracle by Glenda Millard

## Fantastic Art:

[Life of Christ by Giotto](#)

[Christmas Bells and Wildflowers by Ellis Rowan](#)

## Poetry Picnic:

[Advent Poems](#)

[A Warm December Night by Virgo](#)

## Sing a Song:

[I Wonder as I Wander](#)

[Advent Hymns & Carols \(One Per Day 24\)](#)

[12 Days of an Aussie Christmas](#)

[Aussie Jingle Bells](#)

## Enjoy a Walkabout:

Wander outdoors and soak up a little Aussie sunshine on a quiet and restful walk. Take note of the flowers blooming, insects humming, bird choruses and busy creatures. Reflect upon all that you are grateful for and what you notice about the expression of God's personality in what you see. Journal your observations by using the notebook page on pg. 16.

## Get Creative:

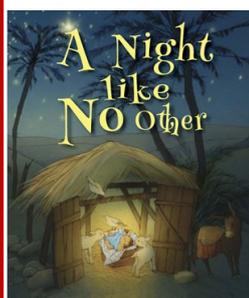
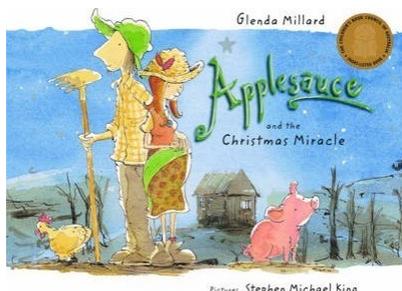
Make an Aussie Christmas Decoration or gift.

## Christmas Books!



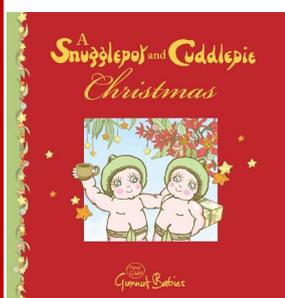
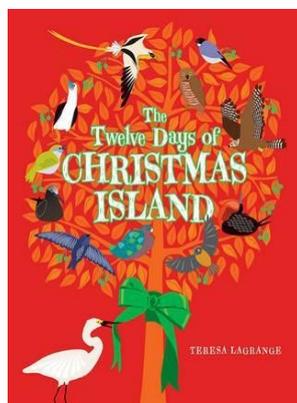
Benjamin is a Watchman. It's his job to watch for the sign that all God's promises are coming true... to watch a stump. Trouble is, it's hard just waiting.

Against a very Australian setting of drought and bushfire, a little pig called Applesauce learns that Christmas comes from the heart.



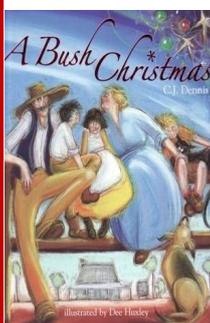
This beautifully illustrated book shares the story of the first Christmas night, a night like no other.

In the Twelve Days of Christmas, we count down to Christmas and celebrate the unique birds that live on this wild and remote island.

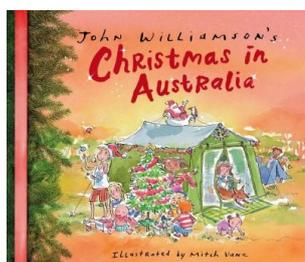


'One more day.' Snugglepot put a mark on the calendar. 'I wish Christmas would hurry up and come.' Christmas is coming, and Snugglepot and Cuddlepie are getting everything ready. But the list of things to do is long and Cuddlepie might be too busy to remember Snugglepot's present!

It's Christmas in Australia and Dad wants that perfect Christmas family photo, but someone is always missing!



It's Christmas in the bush and there's not a sign of snow in sight. The kitchen has heated up nicely with enough roasted turkey and plum pudding to help diners burst at the seams.



## Gift Ideas for the Budding Naturalist



- ◇ [A Portable microscope](#) that works with your phone or tablet. Easy to use clip-on microscope that will work with most phones and iPads. Hours and hours of fun exploration for your kids.
- ◇ [A Field Magnifier Pocket Lens \(Loupe\).](#)
- ◇ [Kookaburra Card Game.](#) It consists of 4 x 12 native Australian birds beautifully illustrated with linoprinted images. The game is played much like 'Happy Families' or 'Go Fish' or for younger players a version of Snap works well or they can be used in memory games.
- ◇ [A Bug Viewing Jar.](#)
- ◇ [Outdoor Discovery Kit.](#) Explore plants, bugs, and more with these outdoor tools for some naturally fun experiments. See similarities and differences between different bugs, investigate what plants need to grow and track their progress with the different labels. Ten double-sided activity cards include easy-to-follow experiments to capture, create, and observe the world outside.
- ◇ Treasure beautiful flowers forever with a [flower press craft kit](#). Use the press to transform garden flowers into bookmarks, greeting cards and more.
- ◇ [Grow Your Own Chamomile Tea. Kit](#) contains everything you need to grow and brew a nice cup of herbal tea.
- ◇ An easy to build, solar operated [robotic beetle](#).
- ◇ Enjoy orienteering with a [Silva Compass](#).

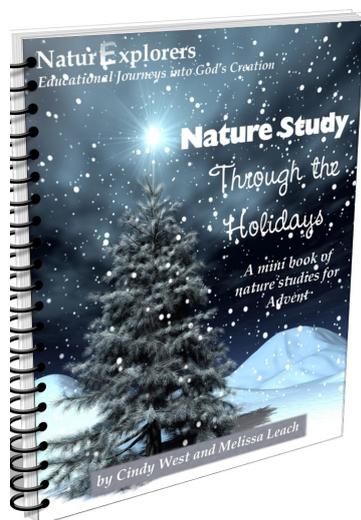


# Advent Studies

The Morning Basket presents a free [Advent Study](#). The plans include three weeks of Morning Time activities to help you count down the days from December 1 through Christmas. You can do these plans as a family to enhance your holiday season and for a great introduction to Morning Time. Bring beauty (and fun!) to your homeschool with poetry, fine arts, nature study, good books, and so much more — all prepared for you with your choice of a grid or loop schedule to follow.

You may not think Advent nature study should be a 'thing', but these unique Christmas lessons will keep the entire family excited about school in December!

[This unique Advent curriculum](#) is just what you need to prepare your children's hearts for Christmas!



## Identification Challenge

Can you find the identity of this spider? Let me know by email at: [marie@naturestudyaustralia.com.au](mailto:marie@naturestudyaustralia.com.au). Who will be the first to guess and receive a **Steve Parish colouring book**?



Backyard Stargazing Event  
 Geminid Meteor Shower  
*Watch Stars Shoot by*  
**14th December 2018**

Free printables!

# Herb Nature Study

8 free printables: Handicraft, poem, life cycle, anatomy, herb medicinal uses, herb scientific name, visual & written narrations

*Holistic Homeschooler*

Many of you have been searching for a [Herb Nature Study](#). Imagine my excitement when Jo found one and shared it with me. Go take a look! Thanks Jo!



*Celebrate*  
**Summer Solstice**  
**22nd December 2018**

# December Nature Watch Chart

Use the simple ideas in this chart to encourage outdoor explorations.

<p>Search for and admire the beautiful display of flowering Silky Oaks.</p> 	<p>Go find a weaving, spiky Christmas spider and observe it.</p> 	<p>Research and tell your family about the migrating red crabs on Christmas Island.</p> 	<p>Prepare to observe the <a href="#">Geminid meteor shower</a> 14th December for a spectacular shooting star event.</p> 
<p>What plants are flowering in your area? Can you find any Christmas bells?</p> 	<p>Are your veggies ready for harvest?</p> 	<p><a href="#">Summer Solstice</a> is on the 22nd December. Mark your calendar and plan a summer picnic.</p> 	<p>Have you noticed Christmas beetles by your night lights yet? Keep watching.</p> 
<p>Enjoy a bush walk while exploring for mistletoe.</p> 	<p>If you find mistletoe, you might spot a mistletoe bird.</p> 	<p>Pick berries!</p> 	<p>Explore Banksia logs for King Crickets.</p> 
<p>Can you hear squabbling honeyeaters? Listen carefully.</p> 	<p>When will the flying ants emerge?</p> 	<p>Fly a kite!</p> 	<p>Find out about the <a href="#">Christmas Tree Worms</a> decorating coral reefs. Share your findings with others.</p>

## Keep an eye out for:

- Strawberries
- Beetles
- Flying ants
- Tree Dragons
- Kingfishers feeding
- Christmas Bush flowering
  - Flowering Grasses
- Water Robins in creeks
- Bluebottles on beaches

## Journal Topics to Explore:

- **Summer Solstice**
- **Meteor Showers**
- **Christmas plants in your locality.**
- **Crabs**
- **Beetles**
- **Mistletoe and the Mistletoe Bird.**

## SUMMER NATURE TABLE IDEAS:

Flowering Grass Bouquets | Insect Displays | Insect Models | Gum Blossoms and Gum Nuts | Mistletoe | Nature Prints in Clay | Butterfly Observation and Monitoring Centre | Snail Homes | Flowers

*"Who can add to Christmas? The perfect motive is that God so loved the world. The perfect gift is that He gave His only Son. The only requirement is to believe in Him. The reward of faith is that you shall have everlasting life." ~ Corrie Ten Boom*

# A Photo Scavenger Hunt

~ A red flower

~ Something green

~ A Christmas beetle

~ A Christmas spider

~ Some mistletoe

~ Something small

~ Gum nuts

~ Berries

~ An Insect

~ Something hairy

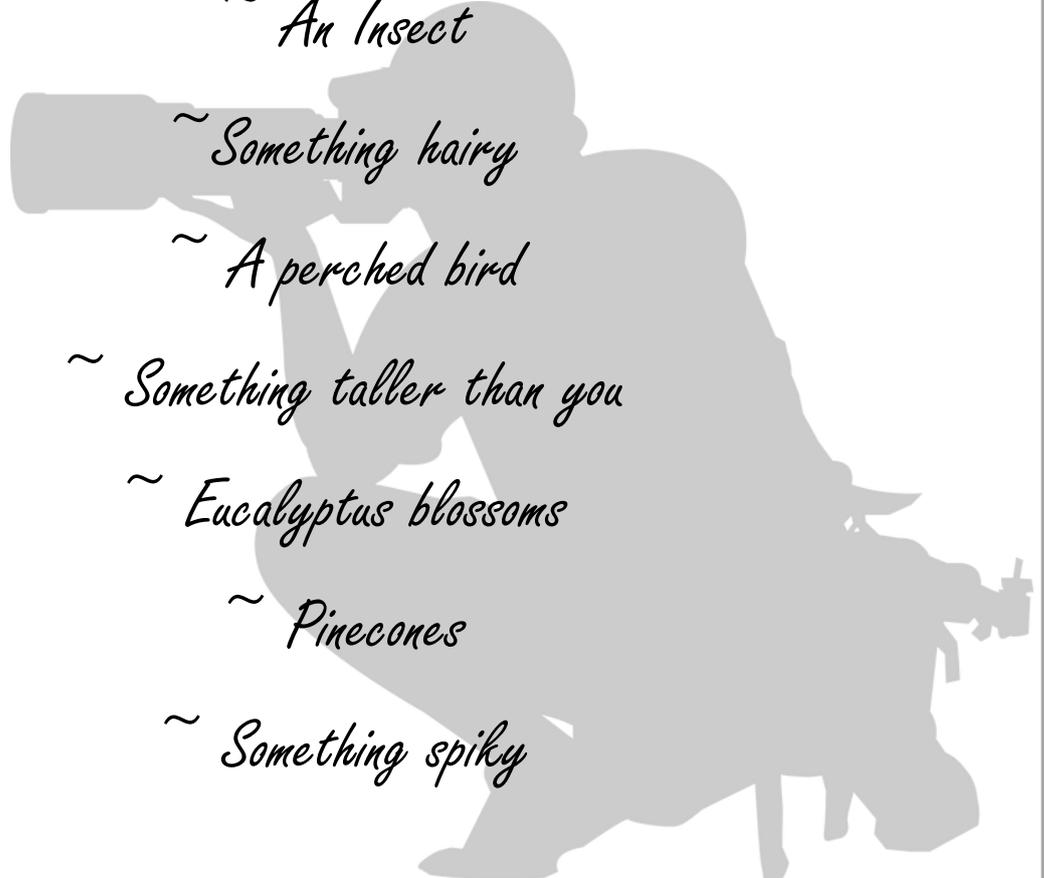
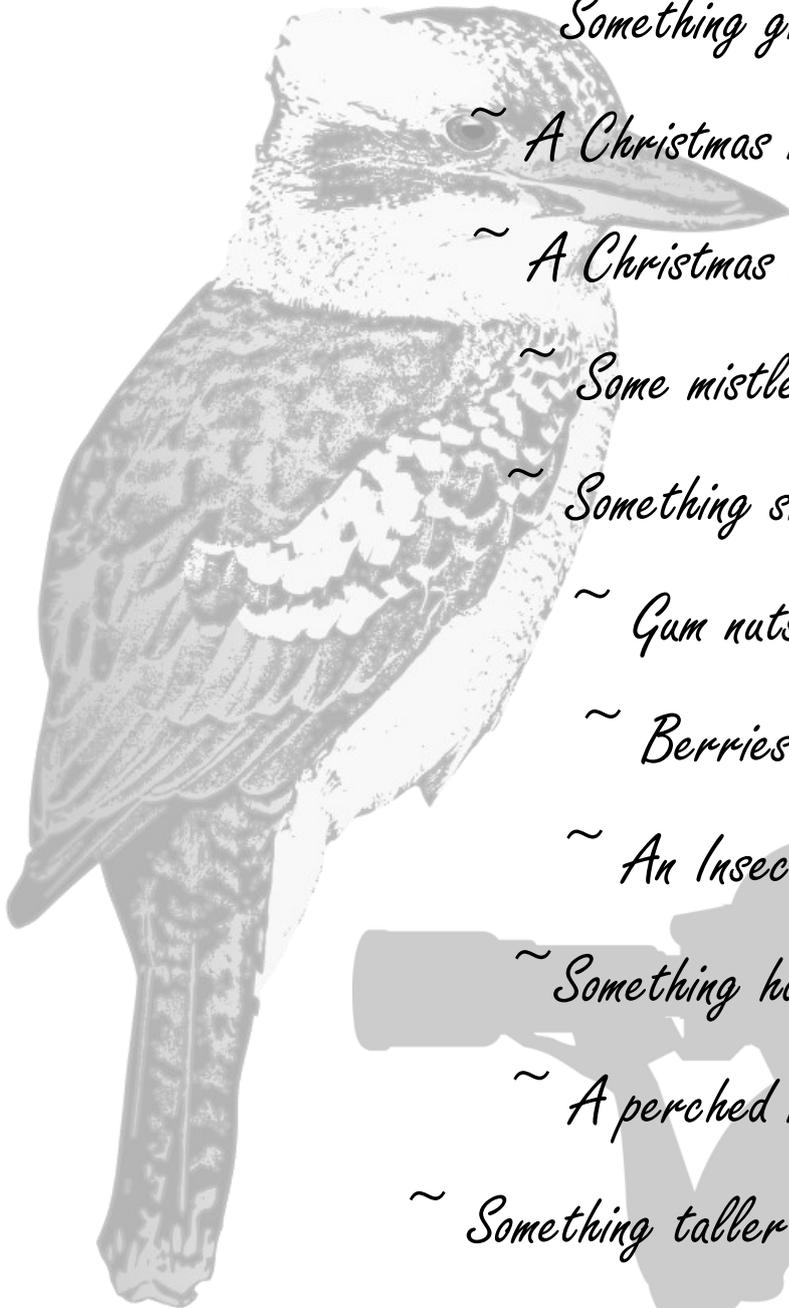
~ A perched bird

~ Something taller than you

~ Eucalyptus blossoms

~ Pinecones

~ Something spiky





# A Summer Nature Walk



Weather:

Textures:

Colours:

Words:

Shapes:

Sounds:

Scents:

Impressions:

Observations:



Draw your field sketches here.

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Time:</b>	<b>Place:</b>
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My Experience:-

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# A Christmas Nature Walk



Draw your field sketches here.



Weather:

Textures:

Colours:

Words:

Shapes:

Sounds:

Scents:

Impressions:

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Place:**

My Experience:-

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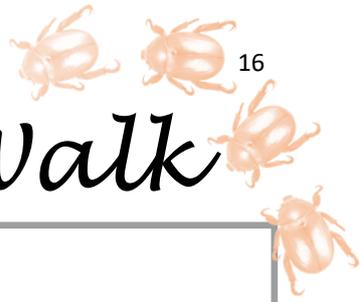
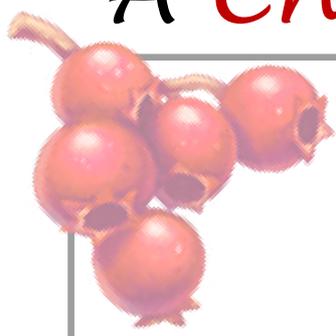
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Observations:

# A Christmas Nature Walk



Textures:	Colours:	Words:
Shapes:	I feel:	I see:
I smell:	I hear:	Weather:
Date:	Time:	Place:

# A Thankful Experience



As the end of the year approaches, we reflect upon the things we are grateful for. Step outdoors and draw or write about all the things in creation you are thankful for.