

The Great Backyard BIOlympics: Nature Decathlon

Decathlon Event 1: Backyard Bird Bowl

Description: Break out the binoculars and watch the birds in your backyard. Don't have binoculars? Make your own kid-friendly craft binos!

Goal: Discover which birds live in your backyard or neighbourhood.

How to:

1. Spend at least 15 mins watching birds in your yard or neighbourhood. Or watch throughout the day
2. Identify the species you are seeing by using the Backyard Bird Checklist or Merlin app.
3. Fill in the Backyard Bird Checklist (or create an eBird checklist) with what you've seen
4. Send in your completed checklist to kstephens@oakridgesmoraine.org

Rules:

- One submission per challenge per household
- Submit your email entries before noon on Monday June 8th to kstephens@oakridgesmoraine.org
- Make sure to adhere to any park or natural area closures in your neighbourhood, and practice safe social distancing in the parks that are open.
- Respect nature by enjoying it from a distance & not handling any animals

Resources you need:

Backyard Bird checklist

Merlin app: <https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/>

Additional Resources:

Learn about birds and binoculars from TRCA: <https://youtu.be/MUWz3N8xpVM>

Make your own kid-friendly craft binos here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iM-oM8fPduo>

Other bird resources: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/>

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Decathlon Event 2: Bumble Bee Bonanza

Description: Buzz Buzz! Did you know that there are over 350 species of bees in the GTA? Get to know some of the bumble bees that pollinate plants in our neighbourhoods.

Goal: Submit as many bumble bee species as you can find to Bumble Bee Watch

How to:

1. Spend some time watching the visitors to flowers for bumble bees
2. If you spot bumble bees, snap photos of them. Make sure to get a shot of the face, as well as the patterns on the rest of the body (thorax & abdomen)
3. Try to identify the bumble bee using the ID guide
4. Using either the app, or the website (recommended), submit your sighting to Bumble Bee Watch
5. Before noon on June 8th, send a screen capture of your submission to kstephens@oakridgesmoraine.org or post in the Facebook event
 - Website: Go to "My Profile" to see a list of your recent bumble bee sightings
 - App: Go to "Settings" > "Manage Account" > "View Profile" (will open the webpage as above)

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Resources you need:

Bumble Bee Watch: <https://www.bumblebeewatch.org/>
[Bumble Bees of South-Central Ontario](#)

Additional Resources:

[How to Use Bumble Bee Watch \(Video\)](#)

Photo Tips: <https://www.bumblebeewatch.org/photo-tips/>

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Decathlon Event 3: Invasive Species Art-chery

Description: Show off your art skills, become familiar with some of your local alien invading species!

Goal: Draw your best impression of an invasive species you have seen in your neighbourhood

How to:

1. Go for a walk in your backyard or neighbourhood
2. Find an invasive species submit it to iNaturalist
3. Draw your best impression of the invasive species
4. Submit your drawing to kstephens@oakridgesmoraine.org

Rules:

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- Join the iNaturalist project “The Great Backyard BIOlympics: Nature Decathlon” to have your observations automatically tallied, or email/message us your iNaturalist username <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/the-great-backyard-biolympics-nature-decathlon>
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Resources you need:

Paper and something to draw with

iNaturalist: <https://www.inaturalist.org/>

Additional Resources:

<https://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca/resources/fact-sheets/>

<http://www.invadingspecies.com/invaders/>

<https://www.natureconservancy.ca/en/what-we-do/resource-centre/invasive-species/>

[How to Make an Observation Using the iNaturalist App \(Video\)](#)

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Decathlon Event 4: Freestyle Insect ID

Description: Creeping, crawling, swimming and flying - bugs use lots of different ways to get around. Get up close and personal with some of our multi-legged friends.

Goal: Find, take photos of, and identify with iNaturalist as many bugs as you can.

How to:

1. Explore your backyard or neighbourhood – look on plants, fences, sidewalks and more
2. Take pictures of the bugs you see
3. Identify them with the help of iNaturalist and submit

Rules:

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Resources you need:

iNaturalist: <https://www.inaturalist.org/>

Additional Resources:

[How to Make an Observation Using the iNaturalist App \(Video\)](#)

Key to the Major Insect groups: https://www.backyardnature.net/in_order.htm

Use BugGuide’s Clickable Guide: <https://bugguide.net/node/view/15740>

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Decathlon Event 5: Chipmunk Challenge

Description: Chipmunks and squirrels do some funny things when they think we aren't watching. Get creative with a story about the chipmunks in your backyard or neighbourhood.

Goal: Write your best backyard Chipmunk short story.

How to:

1. Write a short story about the chipmunks in your backyard or neighbourhood. Maximum 2 pages or 700 words
2. Send in your story to kstephens@oakridgesmoraine.org

Rules:

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Resources you need:

Your imagination!

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Decathlon Event 6: Tree-athlon

Description: Bark. Twigs. Flowers. Leaves. There are so many parts of a tree, and just as many ways to identify them. Get up close and personal with your friendly neighbourhood trees.

Goal: Identify at least 3 tree species in your neighbourhood.

How to:

1. Go for a walk in your backyard or neighbourhood
2. Take pictures of trees (more than 20' tall, single stem)
 - If you can, snap pictures of the bark, buds, leaves, and branches to help you figure out the species.
3. Identify them with the help of iNaturalist and submit

Rules:

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- Make sure to adhere to any park or natural area closures in your neighbourhood, and practice safe social distancing in the parks that are open.
- Respect nature by enjoying it from a distance & not handling any animals or plants

Resources you need:

iNaturalist: <https://www.inaturalist.org/>

Additional Resources:

Backyard Tree ID with TRCA: <https://youtu.be/egiBXasEMYY>

See which trees are native in your area: <https://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/tree-atlas>

[How to Make an Observation Using the iNaturalist App \(Video\)](#)

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Decathlon Event 7: Shrub Shuffle

Description: Shrubs provide habitat for lots of wildlife! Keep an eye out for bird nests and flowers which may attract pollinators!

Goal: Identify as many shrubs as you see on a walk through your neighborhood.

How to:

1. Go for a walk in your backyard or neighbourhood
2. Take pictures of shrubs (less than 20' tall, have multiple stems)
 - Make sure to snap pictures of the bark, buds, leaves, and branches to help you figure out the species.
3. Identify them with the help of iNaturalist and submit

Rules:

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Resources you need:

iNaturalist: <https://www.inaturalist.org/>

Additional Resources:

[How to Make an Observation Using the iNaturalist App \(Video\)](#)

Learn about native shrubs here: <http://www.trca.on.ca/dotAsset/215966.pdf>

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Decathlon Event 8: Fishing for Flowers

Description: Hundreds of colorful flowers bloom every spring and summer in Ontario - which ones can you find in your neighborhood?

Goal: Identify as many flowers you can find in your neighbourhood that aren't in a garden.

How to:

1. Explore an area that isn't a garden (park, lawn, forest edge)
2. Take pictures of flowers that you see
 - Snap pictures of the flower, leaves, and other parts that catch your eye
 - Eg: Is the stem square? Are the leaves fuzzy?
3. Identify them with the help of iNaturalist and submit

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Resources you need:

iNaturalist: <https://www.inaturalist.org/>

Additional Resources:

Plant ID using iNaturalist with TRCA: <https://youtu.be/3nOHntGxVWo>

Search flowers by colour: <https://www.ontariowildflowers.com/main/colour.php>

Search flowers by number of petals: <https://www.ontariowildflowers.com/main/petals.php>

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Decathlon Event 9: Dirt Diving

Description: Many creatures live underground. Who are they?

Goal: Identify species in your neighbourhood that live underground.

How to:

1. Explore to find signs of critters who live underground
2. Take pictures of the critters or their holes & try to identify who lives there
3. Identify them with the help of iNaturalist and submit

Rules:

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- Respect nature by enjoying it from a distance & not handling any animals

Resources you need:

iNaturalist: <https://www.inaturalist.org/>

Additional Resources:

[How to Make an Observation Using the iNaturalist App \(Video\)](#)

Use BugGuide’s Clickable Guide: <https://bugguide.net/node/view/15740>

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Decathlon Event 10: Moth-a-thon

Description: There are so many moths, most come out at night. Try some nighttime "mothing" and see which species you can find.

Goal: Capture (with a photo) as many moths as you can under a light at night.

How to:

1. Leave an outdoor light on at night
 - Or set up a sheet to attract moths – see below!
2. Take pictures of any moths that come to the light
3. Identify them with the help of iNaturalist and submit

Rules:

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Resources you need:

iNaturalist: <https://www.inaturalist.org/>

Additional Resources:

[How to Make an Observation Using the iNaturalist App \(Video\)](#)

Ontario Moths: <https://www.backyardnature.net/n/a/moo/>

[How to set up a moth sheet to see them better.](#)