



NATURE HIDE AND SEEK

A game that helps kids learn to observe the natural world around them and discover animals' camouflage techniques.

You need:

- 6 large plastic insects: ladybug, honeybee, dragonfly, praying mantis, blue butterfly, monarch butterfly
- Some adults
- Some kids
- A section of wooded trail (like Amikwiish Way or Moccasin Lane)

How to play the game:

Take out the plastic insects and have the players look at them. Each insect has a very different appearance. Their appearance might help them attract mates or it might allow them to blend in with their surroundings to make it easier for them to find food or hide from predators. An insect's appearance can also send a message. A beautifully colored monarch butterfly doesn't have to camouflage itself because its bright orange and black wings tell birds and other predators, "Stay away! I don't taste good!"

Play hide and seek with these six insects to see how these insects' appearances help them survive in the wild. Play as many rounds as you like.

First round: Kids close their eyes while adults hide the insects in the woods. You can hide the insects along the entire length of a short trail (just make sure

you remember where you hide each individual insect – you need to return all six insects to the museum once you're done playing with them) or you can simplify the game by hiding the animals in a 30-40 foot section of trail. Hide all insects in plain sight (not in holes or under rocks) but place insects where their appearance helps camouflage them. Let kids find the insects.

Second round: Now the kids hide insects along a 30-40 foot section of trail while adults close their eyes. Remind kids to look for places where the insects will blend in with their surroundings. All insects must be hidden in plain sight – on the ground, on a tree branch, poking out through ferns. Let adults find the insects.

Reflection: Which animals did you spot fastest? Which ones were most difficult to find? Why? Did it get easier to spot the insects the more rounds of hide and seek you played?

As you return to the museum, watch for real animals in the woods off the trail. Do you see any? How does the appearance of these animals affect how easy or hard it is to spot them?

Please return the nature hide and seek bag to the museum front desk. Make sure you've found all six insects before returning.

