

Bugs and Buds !

The days are getting shorter and the temperatures are dropping. Now is a good time to go looking for bugs and buds. What do they do in winter?

1. Shine a light under bark looking for cocoons or hibernating lady bugs, spiders, and butterflies. What did you find?
2. Check out holes in trees. Look on branch tips for moth eggs. They are waiting for spring before they hatch. You might also find tiny slits in the ends of the branches where this year's eggs hatched. Draw what you see.
3. On warm days when there is snow on the ground, look around the trees for things that look like tiny pieces of dirt jumping around. These are snow fleas, in sects that scavenge the snow for food. They may also become food for chickadees and woodpeckers, too! What else do you see around the trees? Write a short poem about what you see.
4. While you are exploring twigs for eggs, look also for buds on the branches. Deciduous trees will have winter buds. Conifers will not have buds until spring. The bud protects the developing leaf inside. Try "forcing" a bud by taking a small cutting of the twig and placing it indoors in sugary water near a window for a week or so. What happens?