

Nature Study

Preparation for Winter

Conducted by Mr. John Dearness, M.A., Vice-Principal
Normal School, London.

This is the time of year when the signs of the approach of winter may be observed on every hand. Let us note some of them.

DWELLING-HOUSES. How are our dwelling-houses prepared for winter.

What is done with stoves and furnaces at this time of year ?

What preparation for winter do some families make in regard to fuel ?

What are " storm-windows " ? When are they put on ? How do they keep the house warmer ?

In what other ways have you observed dwelling-houses prepared for winter ?

CLOTHING. In what ways do people prepare for winter in regard to clothing ?

What kinds of clothing that were laid away in the summer will be brought out to wear in winter ?

Why are woollen garments warmer than cotton ones ; and furs warmer than either ?

FOOD. Do people prepare their food supply for winter ?

What kinds of food are stored in cellars and pits for use in the winter ?

Why are potatoes not left in the garden to be dug as they are needed ?

What kinds of food may be left all winter in the ground where they grew ?

Are there any kinds of food better suited for eating in winter than in summer ?

WORK AND PLAY. What differences do you observe in the work of farmers in winter as compared with their work in summer ?

Does winter make any difference in the kinds of work done indoors ?

As winter comes on how do children suit their games to the season ?

Do grown-up people spend their holidays in the same way in winter that they do in summer ?

DOMESTIC ANIMALS. How do farmers prepare for the wintering of their farm stock ?

Does any change take place in the natural covering of sheep or cows or horses as the winter comes on ?

Are there any kinds of food which farm animals eat in winter that they would refuse in summer ?

Do cats or dogs change their coats or food or habits in any way to suit the season ?

If you have the chance to study rabbits or a pet fox or raccoon in the late fall or early winter find out how such animals as these prepare for cold weather.

BIRDS. Are there any robins to be seen now ?

Why do robins go south for the winter ?

What kinds of birds have you observed flying south in flocks ?

Report to the teacher the kinds of birds that you notice at this time of the year in the orchards and woods and by the roadsides. If you do not know their names describe them to somebody who can tell you what kind they are.

Try to find out what the birds that you see in the late fall and winter feed upon.

WILD ANIMALS. Can you find out why we do not see toads hopping about in the winter or snakes gliding over the snow ?

Animals that do not sleep all winter need food when they are awake. Have you ever seen squirrels running about in the winter ? Do you know anything about their winter food ?

INSECTS AND WORMS. Do bees sleep all winter as bears are said to do ?

If you know someone who keeps bees perhaps he will help you to find out what they do in winter and how they prepare for it.

After the leaves fall search in the branches of the orchard trees for cylindrical rings of tent-caterpillars' eggs and for cocoons of the cecropia and other large moths.

If you find any of these investigate how they are protected against winter storms of sleet and snow.

Just before it freezes hard dig in the garden where you might expect to find plenty of earth-worms to learn how they prepare for winter. Dig deep if you do not find them near the surface.

Most of the children who take SCHOOL and HOME can read and perhaps some of them have books that contain answers to the questions on this page. But let it not be forgotten that it does a child far more good to find out the answers to such questions as these for himself than to learn them from a book or from hearing what some person says about them.

To learn well to use your own eyes and to think rightly about what you see will greatly add to your usefulness and happiness throughout your whole life.