

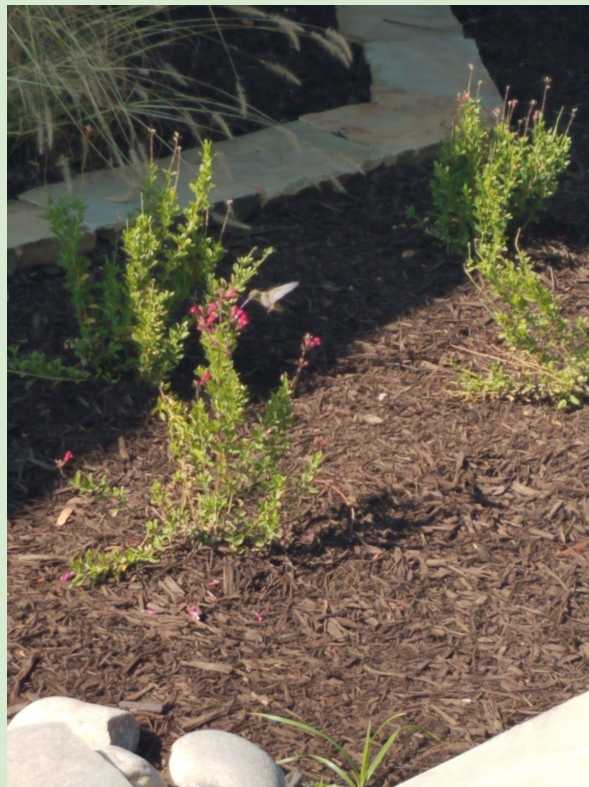
Nature Notes

August 16, 2019

A weekly round-up of useful information as you and your students explore the natural wonders around Nolan Catholic High School.

Courtyard note: I will have more information about using the courtyards as soon as we are able to access them. In the meantime, I encourage you to utilize the green space behind the robotics workshop and the Our Lady of Victory Garden between the arena and gym.

I had the opportunity to explore the courtyards this morning, and check out the wonderful new friend I met! I *think* this is a female Ruby Throated Hummingbird, but she didn't stick around long enough for me to get a closer look.



Question of the Week:

Is poison ivy harmful to animals?

Answer:

No. The reaction to the oils in poison ivy is triggered by people's immune systems, not toxins in the plant. Compounds in the plant bind to our own cell membranes. Our immune system sees those cells as a threat and attacks them. Some people are immune to poison ivy. If you have ever had a reaction to poison ivy, subsequent contact with the

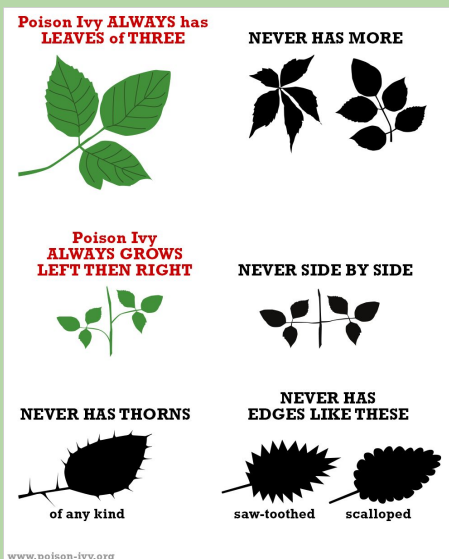


Image from <https://www.poison-ivy.org>

plant will lead to more severe reactions, because each exposure helps your body learn to identify it faster. Even though animals won't get a rash from poison ivy, allowing your dog to come in contact with it and then brush up against you, may cause your skin to react. For more information, check out:

<https://insider.si.edu/2014/08/poison-ivy/>

Campus Spotlight- Desert Willow

Found near the Our Lady of Victory Garden and gym doors

This native Texas plant is not truly a willow, but gets its name from the willow-shape of its leaves. The lovely purple flowers are attractive to hummingbirds, and songbirds enjoy its berries. Have you ever seen a hummingbird near our Desert Willow?

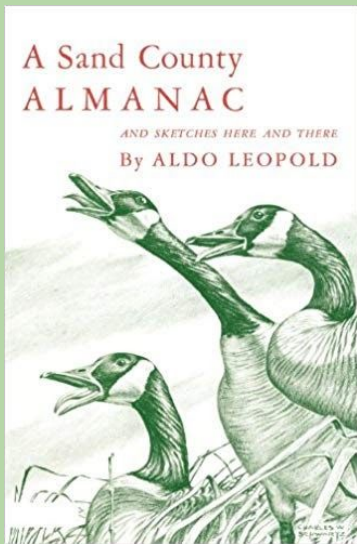


Bookshelf

A Sand County Almanac by Aldo Leopold

Want to share "Thinking Like a Mountain" with your students? Try these discussion questions, taken from [The Leopold Education Society website](http://www.leopoldeducation.org).

- Politicians are often criticized, called "flip floppers," for changing their minds or positions on issues. However, it is critical for scientists to be able to do just this, sometimes referred to as a "paradigm shift." Can you think about a time when you learned



Aldo Leopold is widely recognized as the father of Wildlife Ecology, and is famous for his notion of a “land ethic.” This idea basically means people have a caring, ethical partnership with the land. His writings are both easy to understand and rich in meaning. You can find a sample of his essays, Thinking Like a Mountain, [here](#).

more about a subject and that your earlier assumptions were incorrect you were able to consciously change your mind about something?

- This essay identifies many different perspectives, that of the wolf, the hunter, the rancher, and ultimately the mountain. Leopold is challenging the reader to read landscape from the mountain’s perspective. What does that mean to you?
- Leopold describes the power of seeing the “green fire” die in the wolf’s eye, but he didn’t understand until many years later why his actions felt wrong.
- Have you ever done something you thought was right, but regretted it later? · What made you realize you were mistaken?
- At the end of the essay Leopold seems to be asking if complacency, or “safety,” will ultimately result in danger and that “wildness” is a type of reminder that people cannot, or perhaps even should not, try to control everything. Do you agree?

Where to find Emily next week

On campus:
Monday- 10-1
Tuesday 8-2
Wednesday 8-2
Thursday 8-2

ebreclaw@nchstx.org

Outdoor Learning Headquarters

In the office immediately to the left of the teacher boxes in room D22.

Please come by anytime! Let’s chat about how we can work outdoor learning into your lesson plans!

Personal cell: 682-438-2393