



Pathfinder Pathways...

A Publication of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference Pathfinders

December 2005

A Penny to remind you

Several years ago, a friend of mine and her husband were invited to spend the weekend at the husband's employer's home. My friend, Arlene, was nervous about the weekend. The boss was very wealthy, with a fine home on the waterway and cars costing more than her house. The first day and evening went well, and Arlene was delighted to have this rare glimpse into how the very wealthy live. The husband's employer was quite generous as a host and took them to the finest restaurants. Arlene knew she would never have the opportunity to indulge in this kind of extravagance again, so was enjoying herself immensely.



As the three of them were about to enter an exclusive restaurant that evening, the boss was walking slightly ahead of Arlene and her husband. He stopped suddenly, looking down on the pavement for a long, silent moment. Arlene wondered if she was supposed to pass him. There was nothing on the ground except a single darkened penny that someone had dropped, and a few cigarette butts. Still silent, the man reached down and picked up the penny. He held it up and smiled, then put it in his pocket as if he had found a great treasure. How absurd! What need did this man have for a single penny? Why would he even take the time to stop and pick it up? Throughout dinner, the entire scene nagged at her.

Finally, she could stand it no longer. She casually mentioned that her daughter once had a coin collection, and asked if the penny he had found had been of some value. A smile crept across the man's face as he reached into his pocket for the penny and held it out for her to see. She had seen many pennies before! What was the point of this?

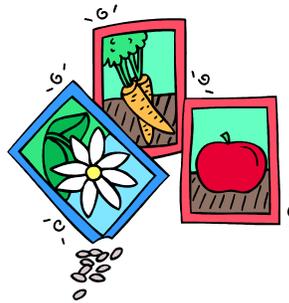
"Look at it," he said. "Read what it says." She read the words "United States of America." "No, not that; read further." "One cent?" "No, keep reading." "In God we Trust?" "Yes!" "And?" "And if I trust in God, the name of God is holy, even on a coin. Whenever I find a coin I see that inscription. It is written on every single United States coin, but we never seem to notice it! God drops a message right in front of me telling me to trust Him! Who am I to pass it by? When I see a coin, I pray, I stop to see if my trust IS in God at that moment. I pick the coin up as my response to God; that I do trust in Him... for a short time; at least, I cherish it as if it were gold. I think it is God's

way of starting a conversation with me." Lucky for us, God is patient and pennies are plentiful! When I was out shopping today, I found a penny on the sidewalk. I stopped and picked it up and realized that I had been worrying and fretting in my mind about things I cannot change. I read the words, "In God We Trust," and had to laugh. Yes, God, I get the message.

It seems that I have been finding an inordinate number of pennies in the last few months, but then, pennies are plentiful! And God is patient...

~Author unknown~

Nature Nugget



1. Milkweed pods with seeds in them are an excellent way to see how seeds travel. Give each Pathfinder a milkweed seed. Have them see how far they can make the seed go without letting it drop to the ground or using their hands.
2. Dried zinnias are a good way to show children where seeds are on a flower and what their purpose is.
3. Also the sunflower, if one is available, will show thousands of seeds. The sunflower can also be weighed and put on the radiator to dry out and then weighed again. The children love to use the word evaporation.
4. Show the Pathfinders the difference between a fruit and a seed. The fruit is around the seed.
5. Find seeds some familiar plants. Have the Pathfinders match the seeds to their parent plants. Look closely at the shapes and designs of both. Briefly discuss how each type of seed might be dispersed.

Stress is what happens when your head says, "No," ... But your mouth says, "Of course, I'd be glad to."

Honor Toolbox



Seeds Ingenious Ways to Get Away

Anyone who has blown the fluffy seeds from a ripe dandelion or tossed an apple core onto the ground has unwittingly contributed to one of the most important missions in the plant world—seed dispersal. For without the dispersal of seeds to new locations young seedlings would be competing with their parent plants, often unsuccessfully, for sunlight, soil, water and nutrients, and the plant's success a species could well be endangered.

Seed production and dispersal may not seem especially significant to those of us whose favorite part of a plant's life cycle is the flowering stage, but for the plant it is the ultimate goal. Flowers are just one step in the process; they are the plant's way of conceiving, fertilizing, and nurturing the tiny plant embryos as they develop into seeds.

Seeds are well adapted to house the plant's next generation because they provide both nourishment and protection for the infant plant in the flowering stage, but for the plant it is the ultimate goal.

Seeds are well adapted to house the plant's next generation because they provide both nourishment and protection of the infant plant. An inner layer, surrounding the embryo, stores enough food to nourish the tiny plant when it first sprouts until its roots can take nutrients from the soil and its leaves can produce their own food.

The outer seed coat protects the embryo from drying out, freezing, and being destroyed by some animals. An apple seed is apt to be eaten, but its seed coat is relatively smooth and hard, so it passes through the animal's digestive system intact. Each kind of seed, no matter how tiny, has its own distinctive seed coat. A hand lens will reveal the ridges, indentation, and sometimes tiny hairs that give it its characteristic markings.

Plants don't move, so how can seeds travel? Among flowering plants, it is at this stage that the seed container plays a vital role, whether it is an apple, an acorn, or a coconut. Plants package their seed in whatever way best guarantees dispersal. Some seed containers serve as foods for humans or animals that eat them and either discard the seeds or, in storing them, carelessly leave some behind. Squirrels hide acorns and forget to retrieve them all. Cherry seeds pass unharmed through the birds that eat them. Humans till the soil and travel to all corners of the earth, we are primary dispensers of many seeds.

Some seeds have wings or blades to propel them through the air whichever way the wind takes them. Some grow parachutes or fluffy hairs, which enables the wind to sweep their seeds aloft. Other seeds have sharp hooks or barbs that attach to passersby. There are even seed containers with seams that burst open with such force the

seeds explode from the parent plant. A few seed containers are buoyant and carry their seed on the water to new destinations.

Thus dispersal of seeds is accomplished in a variety of ways, but they all attempt to achieve a common objective – distribution of the seed far enough away from the parent plant to reduce competition.

[Learning about Seed](#)
[Plant Seeds of Learning](#)
[Pocket Seed Viewer](#)
[Seed Dispersal](#)

Seed Scavenger Hunt

Objective: To discover what seeds can be found outside and how they are dispersed.

Materials:

- Seed Hunt cards – 1 for each team
- Bags for collecting
- Old wool socks
- Hand lenses

Send teams to find the following items listed on the Seed Hunt card:

- Two different seed containers that look good enough to eat. (Don't eat them yourself!)
- Two different seeds that travel a distance of three feet when you blow on them.
- Two different seeds that have hooks to stick to fur. (Put a wool sock on over one shoe and periodically check to see what seeds are hitchhiking a ride.)
- Two seed heads that have more than 20 seeds on them. Which one has the most?
- If there are trees nearby, look for two different seeds that are carried by wind; two seeds that animals might eat.
- Look at some different seeds through a hand lens. Are they smooth? Rough? Hairy? Describe one.

They should collect only if there is a very large area with many seed-producing plants. At the end of the hunt, have each group introduce a seed they found interesting.

Discuss its means of dispersal.

Outreach Activity Ideas

Coordinate with the program director at a local retirement or nursing home to plan a Senior Prom or banquet for the residents with old songs and memorabilia.

Another suggestion is to hold a grandparents tea. Combine the activity with a lesson on good manners for younger students, and your Pathfinders will have a chance to show off their best behavior.

http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson/lesson136.shtml

<http://www.marianhs.org/jrcivitans.htm>

Safety Tip

Facts about Venomous Snakes in Our Area

On average, about 50,000 people are bitten by snakes each year nationwide. Of those, only 8,000 are from poisonous snakes. About 1,500 of them do not seek medical treatment and fully recover. Only about 12 to 15 people die each year in the U.S. from snake bites. More people die by being stung by bees or struck by lightning than from snake bites.

Tennessee and Georgia are home to over 40 species of snakes, only four of which are poisonous. These are the Copperhead, Timber and Pigmy Rattlesnake, and the Cottonmouth (also know as the Water Moccasin).

In the last 40 years, there have been only seven recorded deaths from snake bites in Tennessee. All of this area's venomous snakes have a vertical, elliptical-shaped eye pupil. They're generally heavy-bodied animals and are not very good climbers. They have triangular-shaped heads that are offset from the body. These snakes have a single row of scales on the underside from the vent to the tip of the tail, whereas all of our non-venomous snakes have an overlapping row of two scales on the underside from the vent to the tail tip. *Note:* This detail is best observed on the shed skin of a snake.

85 percent of snake bites are below the knee with 50 percent of the bites being "dry bites", where the snake doesn't inject any venom at all. Snake can control the amount of venom they inject.

There are a number of myths about snakes.

- One is that a snake's tongue will sting you. - False. The snake's forked tongue does not carry a stinger, but instead is a smelling device.
- Snakes always chase you when they are scared. - If a snake comes quickly in your direction, it is most likely because it is confused. Its goal is to get away from you.
- It's definitely a rattlesnake, I heard it – Most snakes rattle their tails when startled and when hitting leaves, brush or anything it's touching the noise can resemble the sound of a rattlesnake.
- The only good snake is a dead snake – False. Snakes eat rodents and insects which can carry diseases harmful to people. Many people have an unfounded fear of snakes, due to myths and other untruths that are prevalent in society.

So what should you do if you or someone you are with gets bitten by a snake? First of all remain calm, note the time that the bite occurred. Keep the limb below the heart and do not apply a tourniquet. So not cut the wound, and do not try to suck the venom. Also do not apply ice to the wound. And make sure to get to the hospital as soon as possible.

Even though right now during the middle of winter you are not likely to have an encounter with a snake in the woods. But here are some tips to prevent snake bits when they are out and about. If you're in the woods, watch where you put your hands and where you step, especially when climbing over fallen logs. Most bites occur on hands, arms, feet and legs. Don't lift stones from rock piles or turn over logs. When crossing a log, step on top of the log and then off, which will put your legs clear of any snakes that may be under the log. If you lift a rock, always lift it up so it is resting on the edge closest to you so that the rock is between yourself and anything that may be under it.

If you're outdoors and see a snake, simply leave it alone. Most of these reptiles want to avoid you too and will try to escape if they can.

Probably no animals on earth have suffered more through human ignorance and superstition than snakes. Snakes are gentle, useful and fascinating.

Hike of the Month



'The journey is the destination'

Blanket Mountain, Smokey Mountains, NC

This trail is 4.1 miles one way and is rated moderate with an elevation gain of 2250 feet. The trailhead is located off of Jakes Creek Road. The Jakes Creek Trail climbs to Jakes Gap where you take Blanket Mountain Trail to the summit of Blanket Mountain. If you are looking a trail that doesn't have huge crowds this trail is for you.

Blanket Mountain is the fourth highest peak in the Great Smokey Mountains. It supposedly got its name during the initial surveys of the area. One of the surveyors stuck a blanket on a pole on the top of the mountain to use as a survey marker and the name stuck. The top of the mountain is a clearing which contains the ruins of an old cabin (now just the stones of the chimney) and the concrete anchors for an old fire tower, now removed. The trail follows a park service road for a while then veers off and starts climbing alongside a small stream. One of the Park's back country campsites is along the trail. The trail is somewhat steep in places but never too bad.

The clearing at the top contains the previously mentioned ruins. The old chimney has fallen but there is no other sign of activity in the area. At no point on the trail are there any views or overlooks; this is a straightforward walk in the woods.

Camping



Dressing for Winter

How often have you been camping in the winter and found that your Pathfinders were dressed completely wrong for the weather? We all know that some of this may be because of a false fashion sense. But some Pathfinders really may not know how to dress for cold or changing winter weather. The essence of staying warm in the winter is having the proper clothing layers and knowing how to use them effectively. This concept is one of the most important outdoor skills that we can teach our Pathfinders. And one that should be repeated as often as it takes until it is second nature for them to dress appropriately.

Clothing is classified in three layering categories (the three "W's"), as follows:

- 1) Wicking Layer - keeps a comfortable climate next to your skin by wicking away sweat,
- 2) Warmth Layer - absorbs moisture and provides insulation,
- 3) Wind Layer - protects against wind, snow and sun.

Wicking - While the long underwear layer provides some insulation, its primary function in winter activities is to draw perspired moisture away from the skin to prevent chilling. Wet skin loses heat 26 times faster than dry skin. If you are active and perspiring, the new synthetic fibers like polypropylene, keep your skin far drier than absorbent natural materials like cotton, wool or silk. Rather than absorbing moisture, synthetic fibers work by repelling water. They actually wick the water towards the exterior where it can dissipate in other clothing layers and evaporate.

Warmth - Warmth results from trapping body-warmed air and keeping it from swirling around to prevent heat from escaping. This layer should have ample fabric loft and the cut should be roomy to hold more body-warmed air. For active use, the reliability of an insulation when damp is especially important. In this regard, synthetics are superior to their natural counterparts because they retain more loft and insulation while absorbing less water. Duck and goose down is virtually useless when damp. And because half or more of your body heat can be lost through your head, it's best if your thick insulating top includes a hood. An insulated vest offers an extra edge of torso warmth and is easy to stow -- an oversized one is ideal because you can slip it over your jacket for rest stops and lunch breaks.

Thin insulating top options include synthetic fleece sweater or shirt, turtleneck with zippered collar, wool shirt, light V-neck wool or wool blend sweater, polyester pile pullover. Thick top options include long, (preferably

hooded) parka or pullover made of thick polyester pile or nylon fleece, or having synthetic insulation like Quallofil, Hollofil or Polarguard. For your legs, choose thick polyester pile or heavy wool pants, or pants insulated with synthetic batting. (Avoid cotton tops and cotton pants like jeans, corduroys and khakis as they hold moisture and feel clammy in the cold.)

Wind - A shell may be your most important garment in the layering system. Outer shells are designed to protect you from wind, snow and even sun. Furthermore, windshells can add up to 25 degrees of warmth in calm weather and twice that in windy weather. Choose a long, hooded lightweight jacket or pullover made of 60/40 cloth, Supplex, Sierra cloth, or other breathable nylon or polyester blends. Three basic types of cloth are used in constructing shells;

- 1) Cloth that is windproof but not waterproof, thus allowing maximum evaporation of perspired moisture (uncoated nylon or nylon/cotton blends). This choice is the best for winter use.
- 2) Cloth that is windproof and waterproof but allows no evaporation (rubberized rain coats, urethane coated nylon). Unbreathable rain jackets are unacceptable for winter use. Unsure about you have? Put your mouth against the fabric to see if you can force any air through it.
- 3) Cloth that is both windproof and waterproof but allows some evaporation through microscopic pores (Gore-Tex, Entrant and similar fabrics). They work well if rate of perspiration is low and if outside temperature is above freezing. Below freezing the pores tend to clog with frost. They are acceptable, though not ideal, for winter use.

<http://www.princeton.edu/~oa/winter/wintcamp.shtml#Winter%20Camping%20Personal%20Equipment%20List>

~~~~~  
*Education is when you read  
the fine print. Experience is  
what you get if you don't.*

- Pete Seeger

Pathways Editor – Karen Reed  
[gccpathways@yahoo.com](mailto:gccpathways@yahoo.com)  
Pathways Coordinator – Joe White  
[joe@pathfinderjoe.net](mailto:joe@pathfinderjoe.net)