

MOUNT RAINIER

NATURE CENTER

STAY CONNECTED! CONNECTA CON NOSOTROS

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST AND BE THE FIRST
TO KNOW ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS!



INSCRÍBETE A NUESTRA LISTA Y SÉ EL
PRIMERO EN SABER DE NUESTROS
PROGRAMAS!

4701 31st Pl. Mount Rainier, MD 20712

email: mtrainiernaturecenter@pgparks.com

phone: 301-927-2163

Spring 2026

*Programs
Events
Education
Live Animals
Rental Facilities*

**Parks &
Recreation**
M-N-C-P-P-C

live more, play more
pgparks.com



MOUNT RAINIER

NATURE CENTER

4701 31st Pl. Mount Rainier, MD 20712

*Pictured: Aquilegia canadensis (Columbine)
by cotingidae via iNaturalist*

Park Information

Website

pgparks.com/mount-rainier-nature-center

Phone

(301) 927-2163

Office Hours

Mon : **Closed**

Tues - Sun : **10AM - 5PM**

Parking

Free Parking 49 Spaces

Two Handicapped Spaces

School and Group Programs

Mount Rainier Nature Center offers curriculum-based NGSS aligned programs for school groups (grades PreK-12) along with community outreach programs.



Rental Information

- **Rental hours: 9am - 11pm Wed - Sun**
- ParksDirect account must be established
- \$150 refundable security deposit
- \$90 (R), \$117 (NR) per hour
- 125 with tables and chairs max room capacity
- Ten 60" round tables and thirteen 6' x 2.5' rectangular tables and chairs
- Includes kitchenette with a full size fridge, microwave, and sink
- No alcohol, smoking or grilling allowed
- Staff on-site during rental hours

Child's Birthday Party Package:

Available Saturdays 9am - 1 pm & Sundays after 3pm

- Ages 1- 12
- \$75 refundable security deposit
- \$240(R), \$312(NR) for 3 hours



MRNC Programs

**PRE-REGISTER AT
PGParksDirect.com**

Program Availability:

- Unless otherwise noted, advance registration through PG Parks Direct is required to insure your spot in a program.
- Space and/or program availability is not guaranteed for drop-in admission (i.e. no advance registration).
- Programs may be cancelled up to 48 hrs. in advance due to insufficient PG Parks Direct registration.

Program Accessibility:

- PG Parks Direct internet: pgparksdirect.com under "find a class."
- Contact MRNC staff at (301) 927-2163, or email mtrainiernaturecenter@pgparks.com.
- Customer Service at Help Desk (301) 699-2255.
- Register at any M-NCPPC staffed facility.
- For programs without PG Parks Direct course number call the nature center to register.



Naturalist Corner

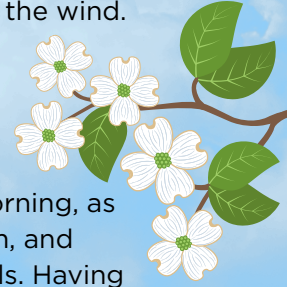
Spring 2026

By Troy Volanth
Park Naturalist

American
dogwood

"As a lucidity without walls. Wide open doors
and windows through which blows the wind, only the wind.
Just the wind."

—Alejandro Jodorowsky



As the sun thaws winter's deep freeze, life stirs from its long, quiet slumber. Spring is a time for renewal, the big stretch and yawn of an early morning, as the days grow longer, flowers bloom, and bikers ring their bells along the trails. Having nearly forgotten the sun's touch, I step outside and raise my head towards the warmth, basking in its might. I am reminded that every night carries a sunrise waiting for us at its end.

Dutchman's
Breeches

Winter gives us time to reflect, sometimes to brood, but spring nudges us from stillness. It's the season to turn potential energy into action; for there is much work to be done. Just as the farmers sow their seeds in the spring and trust what will take root, we too plant our intentions and see what will grow.

Wild
Columbine



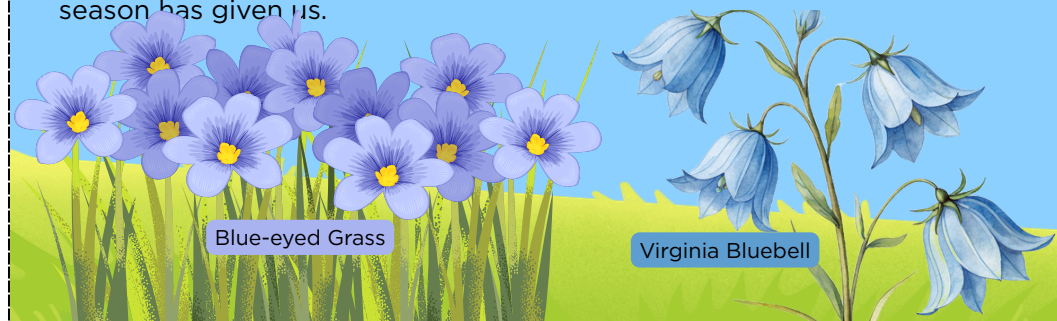
Spring
Beauty

At the nature center, spring is a season of steady labor and explosive growth. Every other Sunday, people of all ages join our Garden for All program to help ensure a harvest that carries us from late spring into early winter. And even if gardening isn't your calling, we invite you to share in the bounty. Stop by the center and ask if we have any fresh vegetables available. We're always glad to pass along what the season has given us.

Ruby-throated
hummingbird

Blue-eyed Grass

Virginia Bluebell



As the ground thaws, have you stumbled upon an unknown fungus in your yard or in nature? If you are interested in learning more about your discovery, the science of DNA sequencing, or just craving some fascinating fungal conversation, join us on the 4th Sunday of every month at Ask a Fungal to take part in the largest community driven fungal survey of the DMV area happening right here at your Mt. Rainier Nature Center.



No matter your age, Mt. Rainier Nature Center has something to offer you. Children 1.5 to 4 can join our most popular program, Toddler Time, to discover the joys of nature. On the first Saturday of every month, kids ages 8 to 12 are invited to join our Adventure Seekers program and come on adventures with our expert naturalists on field trips around the DC Metro Area. Adults need not feel left out! On the third Saturday of the month, you are invited on your own Outdoor Adventures, where our experienced naturalists will guide you on walks through some of our favorite spots. If you love to craft, join Nature Maker Space and learn how to incorporate nature's materials into your creative endeavors. In addition to our scheduled programming, groups sized 10 or more can browse our list of programs carefully crafted to satisfy learning standards in Maryland. Some of our most popular programs are microscopy, animal encounters, and watershed. If you can't make it to us, we can also come to you!

If you've never been to the Nature Center and want to meet all our wonderful naturalists and animal ambassadors, or are just looking for a fun time with crafts, seed swaps, and a plant giveaway, Community Day on April 11th is a great place to start.

So shake off your icicles and come see what the Nature Center has to offer you! Join one of our programs or just visit our animal ambassadors.

Smokey (our rabbit) and the rest of us at the Nature Center will be looking forward to your visit!



School Programs

Mount Rainier Nature Center offers curriculum-based NGSS aligned programs for school groups (grades PreK-8) as well as community outreach programs.



Most programs last 45-60 mins and can be held at your school, local park, or at our Nature Center. The nature center has indoor exhibits, live animals, an atrium with a pond, butterfly, herb, and raingardens, an outdoor playground, recreation field as well as a multipurpose room with a maximum capacity of 120 students.

Visit our website to see full descriptions of programs
pgparks.com/mount-rainier-nature-center

Grades 1-2

Nature Discoveries
Our Watershed
Life Cycles
Animal Homes

Grades 3-6

Rocks and Fossils
Animal Homes
Our Watershed
Life Cycles
Water Olympics
Native Americans of Maryland

FEES:

Programs at the center:
\$4(R), \$6(NR) *10 person min*

Programs off-site:
\$6(R), \$8(NR) *25 person min*

Popular Programs

Animal Encounters (all ages)
Fantastic Fungal Friends (all ages)

Featured

Microscopy (4th grade and up)

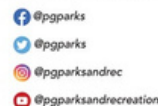
Grades 6-8

Microcosm 101
Carnivorous Plants
Fantastic Fungal Friends



Register by scanning the QR code

Prince George's County Public Schools is not sponsoring, endorsing, or recommending the activities announced in this material/flyer



For more information, please email Customer Service at customerservice@pgparks.com or call 301-699-2255; Maryland Relay 7-1-1 for customers who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability. Our front desk staff has access to an over-the-phone interpretation service and can help in over 150 languages. Please ask for assistance when you call or visit us.

The Department of Parks and Recreation encourages and supports the participation of individuals with disabilities. Register at least a minimum of two weeks in advance of the program start date to request and receive a disability accommodation.

What's happening at MRNC?



A few new residents have moved into the Nature Center's grounds: a Mallard pair (pictured above) enjoying our new ponds, and a squirrel raising its young in the hollow of our courtyard's Sweetgum tree.

Renovations brought us new floors, refreshed our bathrooms, and replaced the HVAC system, while our field grows new grass and prepares to reopen in March.



FROM GARDEN TO TABLE

SPRING GREENS



In 2018, I traveled to India with my family. While driving along the highways of the Punjabi region we stopped at a small gas station to refuel and ended up grabbing lunch. In the middle of nowhere, I had one of the best meals of my life: saag.

Saag is a creamy dish made from stewed leafy greens. It's often made with spinach, but it works beautifully with almost any mix you have on hand: mustard leaves, radish leaves, kale, fenugreek leaves, swiss chard, collard greens, beet greens, or whatever's in season. The flavor shifts depending on your blend, which makes it a fun dish to experiment with. We will be growing an assortment of leafy greens at the nature center this spring, so come by and see what we have available. (after smoky gets his fill of course!)

Ingredients:

- 12 oz. leafy greens (Chopped) (G)
- 1/2 cup onion chopped
- 2 green chilis (adjust for heat) (G)
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1/2 teaspoon garam masala powder
- 1/4 teaspoon turmeric powder
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 teaspoon garlic grated (G)
- 1 teaspoon ginger grated
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

(G) = Grown in our garden

Instructions

1. Heat a skillet over medium heat. Add oil, then sauté finely minced onion with ginger, garlic, and thinly sliced green chili (use jalapeño for milder heat) until golden, about 5 minutes.
2. Stir in your spices and salt. If the pan feels too hot, add 1 Tbsp water to prevent sticking or burning.
3. Add chopped greens. If using thicker stalks, add those first and cook 2-3 minutes, then add the other leafy greens.
4. Cook on medium/high heat for 5-6 minutes, until wilted and most of the moisture has cooked off.
5. Serve as-is for a heartier texture, or blend for a smoother saag (immersion blender, blender, or food processor all work).
6. Serve with rice or add chickpeas, mushrooms, cauliflower, or paneer to finished saag for extra flavor and heartiness.



Community Day & Seed Swap Festival

Free

Saturday, April 11, 2026, 11am-4pm

Activities

- Children's Story Time:** 11:30am-12pm
- Nature Craft:** 12-12:30 pm
- Plant Giveaway:** 1-3 pm

Meet & greet with our animal ambassadors
Plant giveaways
Arts and crafts
Professional portraits
and so much more!

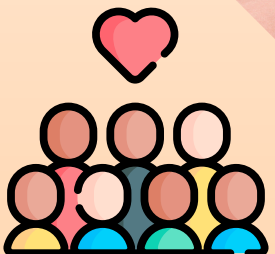


Gateway Aging Together: Potluck & Learning Series

Are you in Mount Rainier, Brentwood, or North Brentwood? There is a new Village getting started in your neighborhood!

Gateway Aging Together is an intergenerational network of neighbors caring for neighbors. Join us for a **free** potluck and social to explore topics related to aging and living with disabilities in our community. Topics might include financial planning and taxes, downsizing and decluttering, health and wellness, yard maintenance and more. Bring a dish or snack to share. **All ages welcome.**

Every 4th Friday of the month from 6:00pm- 8:00pm
Spring Dates
March 27
April 24
May 22



In collaboration with:



Toddler Time

Give your little one a head start on their connection to nature. Join us every Thursday for an exciting time of exploring through hands-on activities, stories, songs, and crafts. Learn about animals, plants, and habitats. Each class focuses on a different nature theme. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Activity code: 20115, Sec: 249 A-L
\$4 (R) - \$6 (NR)
Ages 1-4

Thu, 11:00 am - 11:45 am
Mar: 5, 12, 19, 26
Apr: 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
May: 7, 14, 21, 28



Adventure Seekers

Celebrate exploration! Lift your spirits, expand your mind, and build fun relationships with other adventurers! Join us as we enjoy canoeing, hiking, museums, and trips to natural and historical sites. The DC Metro area has an abundant supply of discoveries for the curious. Get well-rounded by finding adventure around the region!

Activity code: 22201, Sec: 249 A-C
\$4 (R) - \$6 (NR)
Ages 8-12

Sat, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm
Mar 7: Old Maryland Farm
Apr 4: National Arboretum
May 2: Brookside Gardens



Gardening for All

Develop your green hand! Join us at Mount Rainier Nature Center to learn tips and tricks about sustainable gardening, backyard landscape design, and seasonal garden maintenance on your property. Learn to coexist and nurture our native ecosystem.

Activity Code: 20672, Sec: 249 A-F
10:30am -11:30am
Ages 10+

Mar 1: Early Spring Gardening
Mar 15: Cool Season Crops
Apr 5: Natural Weed Control
Apr 19: Direct Sow Crops
May 3: Organic Pest Control
May 17: Spring Salad

Outdoor Adventures

We invite adults to enjoy the wonders of nature with our experienced naturalists! On the 3rd Saturday of every month, pack your lunch, meet us at the center, and ride our bus to explore the region with other nature enthusiasts like you!

Activity code: 22401, Sec: 249 A-C
\$10 (R) - \$13 (NR)
Ages 18+

Sat, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Mar 21: Potomac Overlook Park

Apr 18: Henson Creek Trail

May 16: Soldiers Delight Natural Area



Animal Encounters

You don't need to be Dr. Dolittle to speak to the animals! Meet the nature center's animal ambassadors including reptiles, amphibians, and our resident rabbit! Come learn about their natural habitats, what they eat, and evolutionary adaptations. Our animal friends look forward to greeting you!

Contact us to book an Animal Encounter for your group!

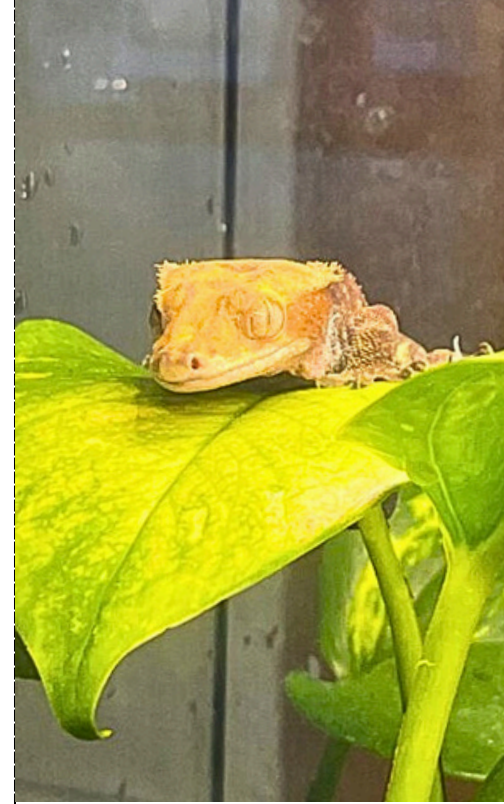
Activity code: 22610, Sec: 249 A-C
\$4 (R) - \$6 (NR)
All Ages

Sat, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Mar 28: Insect Awakening

Apr 25: Herp Awakening

May 23: Spring Camouflage



Nature Makers Space

Join us for a variety of projects and activities utilizing materials from the natural world. One Friday a month we will embark on a new creative endeavor to unleash your imagination and bring your artistic side out!. Come explore what your hands can create using natural materials!

Activity code: 15609, Sec: 249 A-C
\$4 (R) - \$6 (NR)
Ages Adults and teenagers

Fri, 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Mar 20: Jumbo Paper Flowers

Apr 17: Easter Centerpieces

May 15: Polymer Clay Hair Accessories



iNaturalist Training



Join us from the comfort of your home and learn the basics on identification of different organisms from the experts on the region. Learn how to best use iNaturalist tools to your advantage to become a champion identifier!

REGISTER FREE scanning the code or visiting:
<https://forms.gle/1Fj5XanjvKwmzzbt7>

2nd Tue, 7:00-8:30pm

March 10

April 14

May 12



DNA Research & Ask A Fun-Gal Days



Join us on selected Sundays at 10am to bring your mushroom samples to be included in the experiments or at 1pm to ask questions about our process or anything fungi. Our experts are excited to see you! If you are bringing samples to us, please ensure that the samples have been properly documented on iNaturalist, and that each of your samples has a unique iNaturalist observation number by the time of your arrival.

Follow the process below to make your observation:

PHOTOGRAPH BEFORE DETACHING!

- Take more than one picture
- Show where the fungus is growing from (substrate)
 - If attached to something living, identify as much as possible. Ex: conifer, deciduous, oak, american holly, etc.
- Photograph the habit (growing alone, gregarious, in clusters, etc.)
- Take a picture from the top

DETACH

- Take a picture of the underside
- Cut through the spore producing surface and notice if there are changes in color or secretion of latex. If so annotate and photograph
- Add any smell or bruising you observe in the notes section

REGISTER free at mawdc.org/calendar

- 10am - 3pm one Sunday a month
 - Mar 22 Apr 26 May 24



Our courtyard goldfish waking up after its winter torpor, It survived a month under the ice! Come see the animals in our courtyard wake up for Spring!



Sergio the Russian tortoise got a brand new enclosure thanks to our naturalist Madeline! This continues to improve the quality of life for our animal ambassadors and model their natural environment.



Winter cover crops are growing to enrich our garden soil, & our new rain garden fence is complete. The bamboo fence exemplifies sustainability by repurposing invasive species as functional building materials.

The Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education Conference was a great success! Our naturalists gave presentations and soaked up valuable knowledge from other educators in the region.



nature GAME NIGHT

Mar 4, 6:30-9pm
+ More dates TBD

Activity Code: 25413-249A
Ages 18+
6:30pm - 9:00pm
\$10(R), \$13(NR)

Join the creator of the popular game, Wingspan-Elizabeth Hargrave, for a night full of Nature Adventure. We will have 12 tables of 4 players each with different nature inspired games.

Undergrove, Wingspan, and Wyrmspan are some of the games we will have ready for you! Come to Mount Rainier Nature Center! Organized in collaboration with MAWDC.

Light refreshments will be provided.



DMV Night Hikes

Join Mycologist Serenella Linares, Naturalists Ana Ka'ahanui, and Matt Felprin on a series of magical hikes to witness the wonders of the dark. Bring a reusable water bottle, a charged phone, closed toe shoes, and dress for the weather.

Ages 18+

REGISTER FREE at mawdc.org/calendar

Thursday, Mar 19:
Fontainhead Regional Park

Thursday, May 21:
Bull Run Regional Park

Thursday, Aug 6:
Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens

Thursday, Sep 17:
Greenbelt Park

Thursday Oct 15:
Jug Bay Wetland Sanctuary

Thursday Dec 17:
Clearwater Nature Center



Registration required.
For more information go
to mawdc.org/calendar



In collaboration with



City of Mount Rainier's springtime egg hunt



The City of Mount Rainier's Springtime Egg Hunt event will be held on **Saturday, March 28, from 11 am to 1 pm** at the **Mount Rainier Nature Center!** Celebrate the season with a fun-filled day featuring an egg-citing egg hunt, games, and photos with the bunny— free for everyone to enjoy. Don't miss this cherished spring tradition!

Event Highlights

- Picture with the Bunny
- Games
- Face Painting
- Moon Bounce
- Arts and Crafts



Be an expert in nature using your phone!

Join the iNat TRAINING in English via Zoom Tuesday April 14th at 7-8:30pm



Learn to use the app and make great observations of anything alive with your family and friends. **REGISTER** by scanning the code

PARTICIPATE IN PERSON at MRNC, Friday, April 24th at 2:30pm!

Join Director Serenella Linares & Naturalist Raquel Pinto for an immersive forest bathing experience while taking part in the City Nature Challenge and document the life on-site. **This program is part of "The Vision is Yours" conference produced by the Neighborhood Design Center. For more information and to participate in the full 2-day event, register here: <https://ndc-md.org/vision>**

Mt. Rainier Nature Center: 4701 31st Pl, Mt Rainier, MD

Virtual ID Night via Zoom Tuesday, April 28th at 7-8:30pm

Are you a knowledgeable person who can ID creatures or plants by pictures? Then lend your brain to a good cause and join us for a virtual party to identify the observations made for the City Nature Challenge! **REGISTER** by scanning the code





Registration Opens
Sat, Mar 7

PLANTAPALOOZA!

Are you interested in flowers, trees, and everything else green and leafy? Join us for a week of Botanical fun and adventure at Mount Rainier Nature Center! Explore places around the DMV area while learning about the wide and wonderful world of plants through trips and hands on activities.

WIZARDS AND CREATURES

Ever dream of attending a school like Hogwarts? Campers will experience the magic in nature through trips and activities that will highlight "Potions", "Herbology," and "Care of 'Magical Creatures'". Discover the natural world submerged in wonder and awe like a Hogwarts student would!

Wetland Wanderers

Adventure and wonder awaits in Maryland's wetlands! Ready to get your feet wet? Explore nature through the local waterways of Prince George's County. Engage in exciting activities that include the catch, study, and release of wetland creatures and daily expeditions to search for wildlife clues!

BAYLAB ADVENTURES

Become a Chesapeake Bay scientist! Dive into science this summer with our Chesapeake Bay STEM Camp, a hands-on, adventure-filled experience for curious young minds! Campers will explore the unique ecosystem of the Chesapeake Bay region through exciting daily field trips and interactive experiments. Explore the principles of environmental science with microscopy, DIY generators, and more!

Activity Code: 166122-349A
Before Care: 166108-349A
After Care: 166108-349CB
\$180 (R) - \$243(NR)
Dates: (6/22-6/26)
Ages 8-13

Activity Code: 162122-349A
Before Care: 162107-349C
After Care: 162107-349D

\$136 (R) - \$176(NR)
Dates: (6/29-7/02)
Ages 6-7

Activity Code: 16237-349A
Before Care: 162107-349G
After Care: 162107-349H
\$180 (R) - \$234(NR)
Dates: (7/06-7/10)
Ages 8-10

Activity Code: 166137-349A
Before Care: 166108-349C
After Care: 166108-349D

\$190 (R) - \$247(NR)
Dates: (7/13-7/17)
Ages 10-14



NATURE'S ELEMENTS

Master nature's elements just like Katara & Aang would! Join our naturalists on a field trip based camp to master the four elemental forces. Learn the skills of the earth kingdom, fire nation, water tribe, and air nomads as we seek harmony and balance between the elements. Come ready to unite the four forces and see who will be able to master them all!

JUNIOR NATURALISTS

Get to know our parks like a naturalist would! are you curious about what a park naturalist does each day? Join us for this behind-the-scenes camp where you will learn about a park naturalist's daily tasks. Interact with the nature center animals and see how they are cared for and more. you will get to explore the trails, monitor wildlife, participate in a conservation project, and discover all the different jobs naturalists do.

WIZARDS AND CREATURES WK 2

By popular demand: more magic, more adventures!

Ever dream of attending a school like Hogwarts? Campers will experience the magic in nature through trips and activities that will highlight "Potions", "Herbology," and "Care of 'Magical Creatures'". Discover the natural world submerged in wonder and awe like a Hogwarts student would!

Activity Code: 162136-349A
Before Care: 162107-349A
After Care: 162107-349B

\$180 (R) - \$239(NR)
Dates: (7/27-7/31)
Ages 8-10

Activity Code: 166119-349A
Before Care: 166108-349E
After Care: 166108-349F

\$190 (R) - \$247(NR)
Dates: (8/03-8/07)
Ages 11-13

Activity Code: 162122-349B
Before Care: 162107-349I
After Care: 162107-349J

\$170 (R) - \$221(NR)
Dates: (8/10-8/14)
Ages 6-7