Senses activities in the school grounds

TREASURE HUNTS

1. Instruct students to collect 3 items from the environment (preferably off the ground and not living) e.g. they may find seed pods/cones, leaves of different shape/colour, texture, rocks, sticks with galls and also litter.
2. Classify into living and non-living things. Discuss interesting features of the found items and the origin of any litter.

OR

1. Teacher places some items in a tray and explains each.
2. Cover the tray and ask children to remember and find each item in the environment.
3. Check they have collected all items.

CAMOUFLAGE

1. In the classroom show pictures of animals that use camouflage.
   Discuss how camouflage is used in terms of shape, colour, behaviour etc.
   Katydids, Stick Insects, Northern Barred Frog, Diamond Python, Death Adder, Tawny Frogmouth Owl, Bird-dung Spider.
2. Discuss why animals use camouflage e.g. to hide from predators (stick insects) to surprise their prey (bird dung spider).
3. Hide plastic animals (from discount store) in the environment and ask students to find (don't hide under any objects or leaves). Which animals were hardest to find?
4. Back in the classroom ask students to design and make a model animal that uses camouflage (recycled materials might be useful). They will first need to identify features of the environment it is camouflaged against. Test the model by asking other students to find it when placed in the environment.

RAINBOW CHIPS

1. Ask students what colours they can see in the immediate environment.
2. Hand out a colour card cut from paint brochures to each student and ask them to match the colour to an item in the environment.

TEXTURE

1. Ask students to find different textures in the environment- different leaves and bark, rocks and soil etc.
2. Ask students to describe the textures- hard, soft, smooth, rough, fibrous, intricate, bubbly, waxy, furry etc.
3. Using a crayon and paper make rubbings and record the textures.

SHAPES

1. Provide students with cards, each cut to a different shapes e.g. square, circle, irregular.
2. Ask them to match the shaped card to items from the environment.
3. Back in the classroom draw the item from the environment next to the shape.

KANGAROO EARS

1. Explain that some animals have some senses better developed than others. E.g. a bat makes sounds that we can't hear and a kangaroo needs a good sense of hearing so that when it's head is down eating grass it has early warning of nearby predators.
2. Ask students to make their ears like those of a kangaroo by placing their hands behind their ears, palms forward.
3. Students close eyes and quietly listen to the sounds around them for one minute.
4. Students report on what they heard.
5. Discuss why it sounds different when you take your hands away/:-Kangaroo ears are directional ie more sound from the direction they are facing,- what can kangaroos do with their ears that we can't? They can swivel their ears around in all directions.

Sniffer dogs

1. Before the activity collect some leaves e.g. Camphor Laurel, Lantana, Bracken Fern. Crush up leaves (so they are unrecognisable) and put them in separate jars.
2. Students smell the crushed leaves in the jar and then find the matching plant.
3. Optional- students describe smells.

LEAF FRIENDS

1. Students collect a leaf from the ground.
2. Ask students to complete the following activities to get to know their leaf:
    - Trace around the leaf with your finger then put your leaf behind your back and trace the leaf in the air.
    - Touch- feel the leaf with different parts of your body (e.g. cheek, back of wrist) and use words to describe its texture.

- Sight- Use your fist to make a pretend microscope. Describe what you can see on your leaf. How many colours can you see, is it hairy, do its veins run up and down or across?
- Smell- What does your leaf smell like/ Smell a friends leaf.
- Give your leaf a name and tell your leafs story.
- Optional- Trace leaf and patterns on paper or use it to make a stencil/ complete leaf rubbings.

3. At the end place all the leaves in a tree or on the ground and see if each student can identify their leaf.

Photo Head

1. Students work in pairs for this activity. One pair is the camera and the other is the photographer.
2. The photographer stands behind the camera whose eyes are closed and with hands placed on either side of the camera's head, directs the camera (carefully) to something he wants to photograph.
3. A tap on the head and the camera momentarily opens its eyes to take a snap.
4. The photographer leads the camera to another spot and takes another photo. After about four snapshots he leads the still blind camera back to a central meeting place.
5. The camera goes back to try and find the places just photographed.

   OR

   Take real photos to describe the environment and any changes that occur.

HUG A TREE

1. Organise students into pairs. One of the pair leads her blindfolded partner to a tree.
2. The blindfolded student gets to know the tree without being able to see it.
3. After being led back to a central position the blindfold is removed and the student has to find that tree.
4. Discuss all the uses of trees: eg. Hollows provide habitat for birds, bats, possums etc., branches are habitat for spiders and nesting birds, leaves, seeds, flowers etc are food for many animals, provide oxygen, shade, wind breaks, mulch, timber, firewood, beauty etc.

ANIMAL HOMES

1. Take a walk through the natural area. Look for animals or signs of animals. Make a list of everything you find eg. Scratch marks on tree, spider web, chewed leaf, birds nest, wasp gall, scats tracks.
2. Discuss animal homes: How does a bird, wasp etc know how to make a nest? Why do animals build their homes where they do?

LEAF SHAKE

There are many more animals living on plants than most of us realise.

1. Place a large plastic ground sheet beneath a leafy tree or shrub.
2. Shake the branches to cause the mini beasts to fall onto the sheet.
3. Place the mini beasts in plastic cubes and record the number and types found.

TREE MATCHING

1. Locate 5 to 10 common species of tree/shrub in an area.
2. Mark one of each species with a nametag eg Coast Banksia, Cedar wattles, Blackbutt etc.
3. Mark another set of the same species with number tags.
4. Students attempt to identify the number tagged plants using the reference species.

PRICKLY LEAVES AND OTHER DEFENCES

1. Collect some prickly leaves from plants nearby and examine with a magnifying glass. Draw the magnified leaf to explain why the leaf prickles.
2. Discuss why some plants have prickly leaves (deter browsing herbivores) discuss other deterrents- toxins e.g. eucalyptus oil, nicotine, citronella.
3. Fins some hairy leaves and after examining with a magnifying glass discuss uses e.g. to reduce transpiration, deter insects.

UNNATURAL TRAIL

Designate a section of track in the nature area. Along the track place a number of unnatural objects e.g. rubbish, plastic, animal, spoon. Ask students to walk through the trail (without disturbing the objects) and see if they can recall all of them at the end.

GAMES

Bat and Moth

1. Ask the class to hold hands and form a circle (this represents the walls o a cave).
2. Explain that bats sleep in caves during the day and fly around at night in search of insects. They can do this even through their eyes are no better than ours because they see with ears. Their ears are sensitive to the sound of their voice constantly echoing back from all the things in their environment including moths.
3. Choose one child to be a bat and blindfold them in the middle of the circle. Designate another to be a moth also in the middle of a circle.
4. The bat tries to catch the moth. To locate the moth the bat calls out the word ‘bat’ and immediately the moth must send back the echo ‘bat’. The moth will of course be able to move away and so the bat has to constantly call out ‘bat’ in order to find the moth.

CROAK

Each species of frog has a distinctive call. Only the males call and they do this in order to attract a mate. You can identify the species of frogs in an area if you can identify their call. C.D's and tapes are available to assist. This game is about identifying frogs from their calls.

1. Choose six frogs preferably from the local area. Show pictures of these frogsand play their call on a tape player.
2. Ask students to imitate the calls. It is useful to phonetically spell the calles on a card with a picture of the frog.
3. Give each student their secret Frog Identification. Designate each child to be a frog and hand them their frog card (make sure that there is more than one of each species).
4. Ask students to find their mate by call only.

WOMBAT SQUASH

1. Mark out an imaginary road in the playground.
2. The students line up on both sides of the road. They are animals (either wombat, emu. Kangaroo or frog) that have come to the side of the road where there is plenty of grass watered by runoff from the road. They can only move in their own characteristic way.
3. Explain that the road runs through a large area of bush that is home to many animals and that most of them sleep during the day and come out in the evening to feed.
4. The teacher is a truck that goes up and down the road. Its headlights momentarily blind the animals on the side of the road and alarmed by the loud noise of the truck they panic.
5. When the truck calls out the name of an animal, those animals must immediately cross the road (those using delaying tactics are disqualified).