

# SPREADING THE WORD



*Under the Sustainable Marblehead umbrella, the Education Working Group partners with schools and community organizations assisting faculty, administrators, parents, students and leaders to raise awareness, develop environmental education programs and embed sustainability practices in their communities.*

## FEBRUARY NEWS, IDEAS & ACTIVITIES!



GET OUTSIDE! We don't spend nearly enough time outdoors -- especially our children and especially in winter. February is a great time to get out and go exploring. Below are ideas, events and activities that will give you plenty of reason to grab your hat and boots! Want a bigger challenge? Consider accepting the [1,000 Hour Challenge](#) and spending even more time in the fresh air! Being outdoors is shown to correlate with better academic performance and emotional wellbeing. It counteracts the physical inactivity that accompanies hours spent online and familiarizes children with a natural world in desperate need of defenders. Unless children learn to love the outdoors, they won't understand why it needs to be protected. So join us. *See you out there!*

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**WORLD WETLANDS DAY - FEBRUARY 2nd** What do you know about wetlands? To start, these land areas are saturated or flooded with water either permanently or seasonally. Inland wetlands include marshes, ponds, lakes, fens, rivers, floodplains, and swamps. Coastal wetlands include saltwater marshes, estuaries, mangroves, lagoons and even coral reefs. Fishponds, rice paddies, and saltpans are human-made wetlands.

In winter, wetland plants sleep is called *senescence*. Trees and other plants senesce, not hibernate. Even while in the senescent state, there is activity occurring within plants. They are getting ready for spring

when they can grow, flower and flourish.

Marblehead is home to several different types of wetland ecosystems. Forest River Conservation Area is a 26-acre natural area encompassing a large saltmarsh. Steer Swamp Conservation Area boasts a freshwater marsh and swamp within its 48-acre forest. Ware Pond consists of a large freshwater marsh surrounding the pond, totaling nearly nine acres of green space.

For more information on exploring Marblehead's wetlands this winter visit [Marblehead Conservancy website](#). Our wetlands are protected by the Conservation Commission which has the authority to act in accordance to [Town approved by-laws](#).

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## Wild About Wetlands!

WETLAND ACTIVITY! Download a [fun educational activity](#) assembled by Colleen Parenteau, Science Teacher and Gardens Coordinator at Tower School. Learn about the unique wetlands located right here in Marblehead and the plants and funky creatures that call it home. Tackle some cool new vocabulary words and find ample reasons to get outside and explore Marblehead's protected wetlands!

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# Falling for Squirrels



Lots of people feed the squirrels at their homes, whether they mean to or not! Some people put out food in bird feeders and try to keep squirrels away, but squirrels are very clever and very agile. They can outwit even the most squirrel-proof feeders!

Sometimes it's fun to put out feeders and watch the squirrels do acrobatics to get to the food. Some people even make elaborate contraptions so they can be entertained by the squirrels. The squirrels even seem to enjoy the challenge, just like we enjoy doing crossword puzzles or obstacle courses.

Some people train squirrels to eat from their hands. Don't try that at home, though, as you could get bit! Using feeders is safer for you and the squirrels.

Here are some of the best foods to put out for squirrels:

- Nuts like acorns, hazelnuts, walnuts and chestnuts
- Dried corn cobs (wire cages keep them from being stolen)
- Peanuts
- Sunflower seeds
- Chopped carrots
- Pumpkin seeds



**SQUIRRELS!** Why should dogs have all the fun watching bushy-tailed tree dwellers? Winter is a great time to check out how these busy furry friends climb, stretch, leap, balance and practically defy gravity to forage and gather food. Read up on [Fun Squirrel Facts](#) and then grab your camera and head outside. [Send us](#) your favorite and funny squirrel pics for our next newsletter! [*Falling for Squirrels* and *Fun Facts for Squirrels* courtesy of Wild Kids, Jan 2021.]

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YOUTH MEDIA COMPETITION Sustainable Marblehead is sponsoring a Youth Media Competition for students in pre-school through 12th grade. The topic is, *What does a healthy ocean + harbor look like to you?* Participants will create a piece of original content —a short video or animation, audio podcast, news article or poster — to share their message and build awareness! Sustainable Marblehead will award prizes in different categories and age groups. Winners will be honored and their work showcased during World Ocean Week June 5th-12th. For more information, contact [Camron Adibi](#).

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SEED PAPER VALENTINES! Make homemade seed paper to use for fun, useful Valentine notes this year. This craft idea was "planted" in our newsletter thanks to Marblehead Girl Scouts Troop #86287 who made them last February for friends and family.

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WALK AUDIT AT VILLAGE SCHOOL! Superintendent John Buckey, Principal Nan Murphy, Chief of Police Bob Picariello, Town Administrators, parents, neighbors and members of School Committee and Sustainable Marblehead participated in a walking audit of the Village School in December. Led by MassDOT's Safe Routes to School Outreach Coordinator Judy Crocker, the walkers assessed student safety along walking and biking routes from homes to school in neighborhoods surrounding Village School. Placement, position and condition of crosswalks, signage, traffic lights, sidewalks and crossing guards were some of the safety points considered. The audit identified signs that were posted too high for drivers to see, worn crosswalk markings that were not visible and root damage affecting sidewalks. In addition to the walk audit, Judy Crocker separately conducted an audit of arrival and dismissal at Village taking note of student, biker and driver behavior and traffic circulation patterns. She will present both reports and recommendations to school administrators the first week of February. Many thanks to new Superintendent John Buckey for supporting student safety! For more information on Safe Routes to School and how to organize a student safety audit for your school, please email Outreach Coordinator Judy Crocker ([Judith.Crocker@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:Judith.Crocker@dot.state.ma.us)) and visit [mass.gov/safe-routes-to-school](https://mass.gov/safe-routes-to-school).

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OUTDOOR DECORATIONS Ice sun-catchers are a fun and beautiful way to add a little color to trees in your yard and brighten up the neighborhood! Enjoy a walk around your home or through a local trail to find interesting materials from nature -- winter berries, dried leaves, pine needles -- and [create your own Sun-Catcher.](#)



VEGGIE CHIPS This time of year there are a variety of root vegetables that make for perfect veggies chips -- sweet potatoes, beets, rutabagas, turnips and parsnips. Did you know the skin of these hearty vegetables contains a large portion of their nutrients?

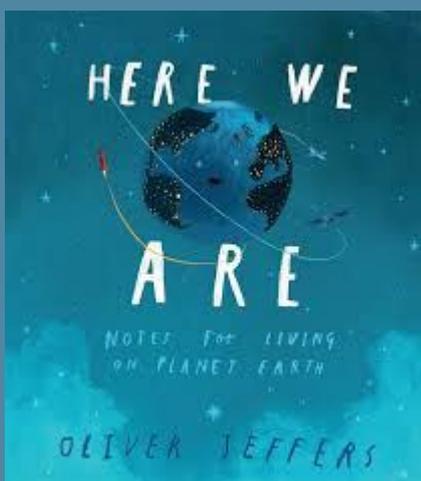
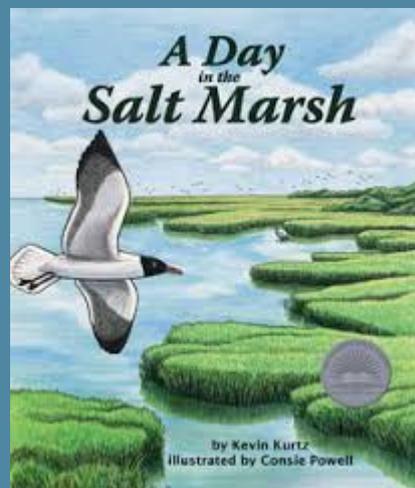
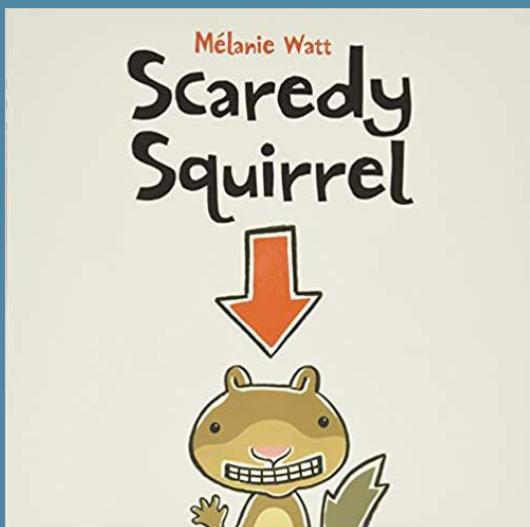
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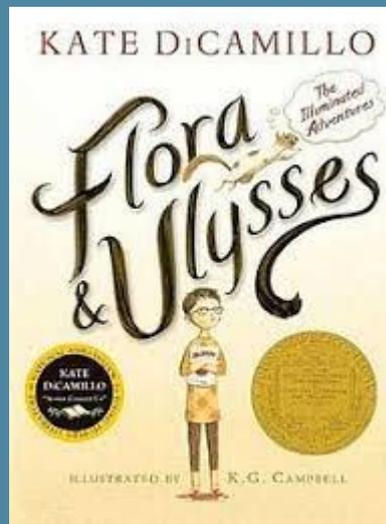
1. Pre-heat the oven to 400 degrees
2. Wash, scrub and thinly slice the vegetable(s) to 1/8" or thinner
3. Place all veggies in a bowl, drizzle with olive oil, and mix.
4. Arrange slices on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper and sprinkle with salt.
5. Bake at 400 degrees for about 30 minutes or until veggies are crispy!

Support a [local farm](#) to purchase your veggies!

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## BOOKS OF THE MONTH!





Join our Education Group  
at our next meeting on  
February 24 @ 7pm via [zoom](#)

We want to hear from you! Find us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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