



Art Gallery  
of Guelph

## #MUSEUMATHOME



### Make a Neighbourhood Nature Diary

Inspired by artworks in the AGG's permanent collection by Philip Croft

## Make a Neighbourhood Nature Diary

Amateur naturalist, photographer, and painter Philip Croft documented the wild plants, insects, birds and other animals that he encountered on daily walks around his neighbourhood in West Vancouver, British Columbia. His detailed sketches and watercolour paintings were published in a book titled *Nature Diary of a Quiet Pedestrian*. Croft's slow, quiet walks allowed him to become familiar with the plants and animals that lived in his neighbourhood and to note their changes each season. Croft accompanied his illustrations with written text, recording the sights, sounds, and smells of his walks through the forest and down to the beach of Lighthouse Park, West Vancouver. Formatting his visual observations like a diary along with his personal thoughts and humorous notes, *Nature Diary of a Quiet Pedestrian* offers a model of how we might document natural phenomena that often go unnoticed in a bustling urban city. Make your own nature diary to record what you see on daily walks or to record a view from a window each day!

### Materials

- Paper
- Pencil
- Clipboard or hard surface to draw on
- Pencil crayons, markers, crayons, or paint

### Instructions

Prepare your clipboard, paper and pencil. Write the date and time at the top of your page. For this activity, you will walk the same route once a day and draw a different plant or animal that you see while walking. Take note of the differences! Has a plant grown or blossomed since your last visit? Did you see a different animal or perhaps new, baby animals? When you return home from your walk, take a look at the drawings you made and research the species you drew. Record the name of the plant or animal beside your drawing. Are they native to your area? Do they exist in a variety of colours or forms? How do they thrive in an urban city? Have they adapted their growth or way of life in order to thrive within the city? Add colour to your drawings using pencil crayons, markers, crayons, or paint. If you have access to a camera, take photographs of the wildlife you wish to draw for more accurate identification and colouring.

For an indoor version of this activity, pick a window in your house with a view outside. Prepare your clipboard, paper and pencil. Write the date and time at the top of your page. For this version of the activity, you will draw plants and animals or the changing environment that you see from the window each day. Decide if you would like to draw at the same time or at a different time each day. Look to the sky and the ground for signs of wildlife. Research and identify the species you record. Add colour to your drawings using pencil crayons, markers, crayons, or paint. Use this activity as an excuse to slow down and notice the wildlife that surrounds you every day that you may not notice otherwise.



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Cover (left): Philip Croft, *Nature Diary of a Quiet Pedestrian (Plate XXXIX)*, 1986, pencil and watercolour on paper  
Gift of David and Jane Croft, University of Guelph Collection at the Art Gallery of Guelph

Cover (right): Philip Croft, *Nature Diary of a Quiet Pedestrian (Plate XXI)*, 1986, pencil and watercolour on paper  
Gift of David and Jane Croft, University of Guelph Collection at the Art Gallery of Guelph