



**Monarch Butterfly Life Cycle**  
Painting by Loretta Kuse

## **Be an Artist in Spring**

### **Art**

- Think like an artist. What kinds of artwork could you do to share what you see on a spring walk with others?
- How does observing beautiful objects in nature help you feel a sense of excitement and wonder? How do artists try to share those feelings with others?
- If you walked a trail with an artist, what questions would you want to ask him or her?
- How can you sort or arrange items found in nature so that you and others can enjoy them? (Floral, seed or fruit arrangements, garnishing food, collages, gardening and landscaping, etc.)
- How have artists helped to convey the need to care for the environment?
- What can we do to be good stewards to preserve the beauty of our natural world?
  - Use good environmental practices as you collect natural materials for art projects. (Asking land owners permission, not picking most wild flowers, not breaking branches, peeling bark from living trees, staying on paths or trails and not compacting soil or crushing vegetation, not disturbing nesting wildlife, leaving objects for others to enjoy, avoiding littering)

## Observing, Imagining, Drawing and Painting

- Use a color wheel, pieces of colored construction or a box of 64 crayons. Find objects along the trail that match the colors on your samples.
- Note how animals are camouflaged in their environment. Female birds have dull colors that match their nest or surroundings. Young birds often have dull colored stripes. Young mammals have markings that help them look like plants and soil.
- How do sunlight and shadow change what you see? Can you tell by looking at objects what direction light is coming from? How could that be shown in a painting?
- What colors do you see when you look at a spring scene?
- What colors might an artist use to let a viewer feel that a picture was painted in springtime? Look for colors you are more likely to see in spring rather than fall or winter. How might a botanist explain the differences between the colors you might see in spring and fall?
- Look closely at the bark on a tree or log. What colors do you see? How would you show the texture of the bark in a drawing or painting?
- What shapes do you see in trees? How would you use shapes in identifying trees? Artists who illustrate field guides must make very accurate drawings. Draw pictures of trees without leaves in early spring and then later with leaves to have a record of the kinds of trees seen on a spring walk.
- Look for all the objects in nature that have these shapes. (Circles, ovals, squares, rectangles or triangles)
- How do things far away differ in appearance from nearby objects? Compare sizes and colors. How could you show that in a drawing or painting?
- Learn about perspective. How can objects be drawn so that they appear to be close or far away? (Colors, shapes and sizes)
- Look at other spring scenes in different media by various artists. How do different artists see the same flower or tree or sky in different ways?
- What insects or birds are returning from the south? Many are using colors and movement to attract mates. How might you draw or paint what you see?
- How did Native Americans use objects in nature to create tools or decorations?

- Locate works of art done by local artists. What styles do each of the artists use? How did they show plants, animals and other things in nature in their works?
- Clay from the area was used to make bricks in early Taylor County. Some of the bricks were used to build local buildings. Learn about the art of brick making.
- Walter Kuse used rocks from the farm to build a house for the family. Observe the artistic designs he built into the house. Learn about the history of the building of the house.
- Carvers use wood from local trees to create works of art. Find trees that have been used to make carvings. (Butternut, basswood, poplar, etc.)
- Learn about how people have used natural materials to create craft items. (Nuts, twigs, seeds, etc.) Look at the objects found near your school that can be used to create a “fairy garden.” Look for natural materials near your home to make a miniature garden of your own.
- Intarsia – Some artists use wood of many natural colors to make pictures that are like a jigsaw puzzle. Find examples in museums and churches.
- Learn to identify plants that have been used to make natural dyes.

### **Using Natural Materials to Make Art Displays**

- **Collages**
- **Paints and Dyes**
- **Materials for Weaving**

### **Photography**

- Photographers are artists, too. Have a display of beautiful scenes or objects you see along the trail. Use a camera to take unusual close up pictures. A camera can be a tool. Use photographs to help you “see” the colors, shapes, horizons, and perspective in the artwork you may want to paint or draw. Make close-up drawings or take close-up photos of plants and animals. Compare detailed photos and drawings with those taken at a distance. How do detailed pictures help an artist create realistic works of art? How might an artist modify these to create special effects or illusions?