



20 ways with Nature Play



Winter edition

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Remember spending time outdoors as a child? Riding your bike, making mud pies and climbing trees? It's what fond childhood memories are made of, but what is different these days?

Tablets, game consoles and time-poor family schedules created a shift towards indoor recreation, but children are losing interest and self-motivation. Unstructured play in nature builds resilience, enhances cognitive development, and helps children and teenagers develop a strong imagination. Have no fear of dirt, because exposure to natural elements such as soil and sand contain naturally occurring microbes which also help in building a stronger immune system.

It's play time, in Adelaide's largest shared back yard!

Adelaide City Council is committed to shaping and enhancing natural play spaces that will inspire, engage and challenge children, and help families connect, socialise and be active! This FREE ebook features two great nature play locations, Bonython Park and Victoria Park, as well as tried and tested nature play activities that will maximise play time and fun, in Adelaide's largest shared back yard; the Park Lands.

Bonython Park and Victoria Park both lend themselves perfectly to nature play, with their wide open spaces and range of top-quality facilities. Bonython Park boasts a fantastic children's playspace, along with a great kiosk surrounded by large open space areas for kids to explore. The recent development of Victoria Park saw the establishment of a fitness circuit, cycling track, BBQ facilities, public toilets and off-leash dog area.

Available to all families these **FREE** activities can be enjoyed throughout the seasons!
How many of these have you tried?

Adelaide has a stack of events and festivals this season. Stay in the loop by signing up to our What's On calendar **here**.

Bonython Park

1. Sand Pies

Winter is the perfect time for you to head outside and get creative with your cooking. You can make all sorts of creations, ranging from sand pies to sand pizzas. All you need is a big pile of sand, a bit of water and of course your wild imagination and creativity! Try the Bonython Park Playspace for a great place to get your hands on some sand! (Handy Hint for parents: Don't forget some baby wipes for the after cooking clean-up.)

Ingredients:

- 1 big mound of sand
- water
- 5 big green leaves
- 10 small twigs
- lots of imagination!



2. Slide down a grass hill on cardboard

Ever wanted to go tobogganing, but have never been to the snow? We have the perfect solution! Grab a piece of cardboard and make your way up the hill in Bonython Park! Once you're at the top, sit on your piece of cardboard and head for your parents at the bottom! Don't try this without parent supervision.



3. Spot the animals

Pop on your safari hat and get out your best home-made binoculars. It's time to go bird watching. Spot all of the different birds and animals (alive and statues) around Bonython Park. The lower lake/river has a great range of birds.



4. Pooh stick racing!

There's nothing more fun than splashing around in a creek! Bonython Park has some great water options, so grab a bunch of twigs along the way and get on your marks! Once you're there, throw two twigs in the creek and watch them race each other down stream!





Victoria Park

5. Roll down a hill

Lie on the ground and make your body as stiff as possible. Keep your arms to your side and let yourself roll down the hill! There's nothing quite like letting go and seeing how fast you can make it down the hill. The hill by the boat pond in Bonython Park is the perfect place to try this one out!

6. Picnic time

Find a nice soft spot of grass, get your picnic basket out and have a relaxing lunch with your family. You'll love it – just remember, food always tastes better outdoors. The Bonython Park Playspace is a great location, so the kids have a nice space to get out all of their energy after sitting quietly during lunch.

7. Start a rock collection

It's time to go rock hunting! There's nothing better to collect than rocks, with not one rock being the same as another. See how many different styles you can find and have show-and-tell with your parents later at home. Bonython Park offers up a large variety of rocks, so go and start your collection there.

8. Mud prints

Here is a chance to use your imagination and create a world where all animals roam free in the Park Lands. Find yourself a great patch of mud to work in down by the river at Bonython Park and start creating animal footprints using your hands and feet. What animals are you going to create? Will a big bear be living in the Park Lands? Or maybe the dinosaurs will return?

9. Catch raindrops on your tongue

People seem to stay indoors when it rains – but why? It's the perfect opportunity to run around and enjoy nature. Tilt your head up and see how much rain you can catch on your tongue. The great open space in Bonython Park will give you plenty of room to enjoy the rain. Make sure you're rugged up in a nice rain jacket though, so you don't catch a cold!

1. Nature Scavenger Hunt

Create a list of all of the natural objects you expect to find in Victoria Park. You can include twigs, leaves, pine cones etc. Give the list to your kids and give them 30 minutes to find as many of them as they can. This game can be played over and over – they will always want to beat their record!

2. Splash into puddles!

The instructions are simple. Find a puddle, wear gumboots, jump and dance like no one is watching! You'll find a variety of puddles in the Adelaide Park Lands, but muddy ones are always the best! Victoria Park should be a great place to splash around.

3. Dig for worms

Every child growing up needs to dig for worms in the mud at least once in their life! Victoria Park is the perfect place to get down and dirty in the mud. You might find one, or you might get lucky and dig up a whole family.

4. Catch some bugs

Lots of little bugs make a home in the Park Lands, especially Victoria Park! Get on your hands and knees and find all the bugs that are living on (or in) the ground. You might even want to check in the trees and bushes, they could be anywhere. Make sure you put them back where you found them before you leave.



5. Collect fallen leaves and throw them in the air!

One of the best parts of winter (except for the mud!) is the beautiful leaves that make their way onto the ground in Victoria Park. Well it's time to have some fun with them! Grab a bunch of leaves on the ground and throw them in the air – as high as you can! Watch them majestically float to the ground all around you.

6. Friendly neighbours

It's time to meet your neighbours! We have lots of little friends hiding on the ground below us. It's time to go searching for them in Victoria Park! Make sure you're a friendly neighbour and that you don't disturb their homes too much.

7. Bark Painting

Always wanted to be an artist? Well we've got a fun and free way for you to practice! All you need is some bark, a bit of mud and a little bit of water. Get the water, combine it with some mud and start decorating your bark! Use your imagination – you can paint anything you want on your new piece of art. Lots of bark can be found around the trees in Victoria Park to start you on your artistic journey.



8. Balance on a log

Challenge a friend to see who has the better balance. Find two logs at Victoria Park and get ready to have a bunch of fun. Each of you hops onto one log – and see who can balance on it for the longest without falling off! If you really want a challenge – try and do it on one leg! But be careful and make sure you don't fall off and hurt yourself!

9. Pine cone bocce

Collect a bunch of pine cones in Victoria Park (nearby the grandstand is a great place to start) and challenge a friend to a game of bocce! Have a ball (or any small object) in the middle of the grass as your target. Both of you get three pinecones to throw and the person who gets theirs closest to the target wins!



All Park Lands:

1. Find a geocache

Geocaching is the free high-tech treasure hunt where you use your GPS receiver to find caches hidden by other players. It's a great way to be outdoors, enjoy the environment and revel in the thrill of the hunt! Can you find any in the Park Lands?

2. Nature Bingo!

Use the attached 'Nature Bingo' sheet to challenge your friends on an adventure around the Park Lands! When you complete one of the activities shown, cross it off and move onto the next one! Once you have completed four in a row – you have won!



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