

SOUNDSIDE LEARNING

THIS WEEK ON CORE SOUND

COMING UP AT CORE SOUND

- Porch Talks, June 16, 23 & 30
- Core Sound Marine Science Academy, June 20-24
- Art Days, June 23-24
- Core Sound Shrimp Fry, July 9

Sound Reading Material For You & Your Child



Sea Glass Summer By Michelle Houts

One summer, visiting his grandmother, a boy named Thomas is given a magnifying glass that once belonged to his grandfather. Using it Thomas explores the beach, turning grains of sand into rocks and dark clamshells into swirling mazes of black, gray, and white. When his grandmother shows him a piece of sea glass, Thomas is fascinated...

Grade Level: preschool - 3
Pages: 32

Mosquito Time

It's that time of year again! The time when pesky buzzing and itchy bumps are the norm. It is no surprise that mosquitoes enjoy Core Sound as much as we do, for mosquitoes like water and thrive in humid, warm climates.

We all emit carbon dioxide while exhaling, and mosquitoes notice carbon dioxide fluctuations in their environment. Once the gas is noticed, mosquitoes fly toward that area. Since each of us have a unique body odor comprised of compounds on our skin and in our sweat, some of us are more appealing to mosquitoes than others. Body aroma is genetic, so if you are kin to someone who is frequently bitten by mosquitoes, you may be more susceptible too.

My daughter frequently gets "eaten up" by mosquitoes. Welts along her arms and legs are part of her summer experience. We used to joke and tell her it was because she was sweeter than us ... perhaps she really is!

There are, however, things that can be done to make coexisting with these nuisances a bit easier. Since mosquitoes lay eggs in stagnant water, begin by ridding water from gutters, buckets, and anywhere you find it. Change water in bird baths, potted plant trays, and rain barrels weekly, and keep swimming pool water treated and circulating. This will make it harder for mosquitoes to multiply near you.

Planting mosquito-repellant plants is another viable way to improve your summer experience along the coast. Some great options are citronella grass, lavender, lemongrass, marigolds, basil, scented geraniums, peppermint, and garlic. Not only are these plants pretty and deterrents for irksome mosquitoes, but they are also suitable for our coastal area and grow well here.

Of course, none of these efforts will completely rid mosquitoes, so it is important to take other precautions as well. Wearing long shirts, pants, and socks is advised. Use EPA-registered mosquito repellent as directed on labels, and stay indoors, when possible. A well-monitored fire is a great mosquito deterrent also which is a great reason to enjoy a firepit during summer evenings.

Grandmama used to tell us stories about rolling up old net bunt and burning it in their backyards to rid mosquitoes. They would even fan the smoke towards their house's open windows at times. The older I get the more I appreciate the wisdom of my ancestors.



Photo from ncagr.gov



Chasing Fireflies

One of my fondest memories as a little girl is running barefoot through the sand on Shackleford Banks, especially at night. Nighttime marked the start of a pastime enjoyed by my sisters and me for it was at night the skies lit up! As magical as a fairy tale, among the clicking cicadas and ribbiting frogs appeared brightly blinking curiosities. Our parents called them fireflies, but they were lightening bugs to us.

So, rigged with glass mason jars with lids that Dad had twisted and pushed an icepick through to allow air inside, we three adventurers headed out into the night. Our destination was always the sandy-walled dunes. Once there amidst those hills, we slowed our pace and became as quiet as possible. Our heavy running strides instantly morphed into dainty tiptoed marching. Creeping through the darkness with high, slow steps, we kept close together with our eyes towards the heavens above.



We inched through the sand, occasionally stepping on a shell that would cause a silent gasp and squinched-eyed grimace, but nothing could stray our focus from our mission. Then, every time startling us a bit, it began; lights flickered rhythmically around us producing a lightshow like no other.

My sisters and I giggled as we would try, try, try to capture our lit treasures. We swung our open jars through the air up, down, and all around. We helped one another, well, my sisters helped little ol' me, achieve success. After filling each jar, we sang and skipped with wide-faced grins back to our camp with nature's night lights glowing in our innocent hands.



Laying in our bunk beds with a salty breeze wafting through open windows, we fixated on the blinking lights beside us, our personal Diamond Ladies, until sleep rested upon our sunburnt faces and closed our tired eyes. Waves rocked us in our sleep as we dreamed of another day like we had just experienced. And, yes, Mama released those fireflies as we slept knowing full well that her little girls would be on another hunt for them soon.



How and Why Fireflies Light Up



So, how do fireflies light up? The light is the product of an abdominal chemical reaction. When air mixes with a substance called luciferin the familiar firefly glow occurs.

Why does this happen? There are three popular opinions as to why these beetles, yes, beetles, light up our skies. First, it is believed that fireflies find safety with their flashiness for it warns predators of their bitter taste. This doesn't deter all hunters, however, for some frogs enjoy the flavor so much that they themselves begin to glow.

Another belief is that fireflies light up for romance. Male fireflies signal their desire to find mates while agreeable females flash their lights in return.

Finally, others assert that fireflies turn on their bright signals to attract dinner. Each species has a unique pattern of flashing, and some females imitate the patterns of other varieties. Males land next to them, only to be eaten alive.

So, with each new firefly you meet, remember that it is more than a child's nighttime wonder, although that's my favorite way to view them. Fireflies are also communicators of safety, love, and mealtime!