

# 2BParks Environmental Education

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## The Nature Reserve of the Santo André and Sancha Lagoons in the fall

The on-going Environmental Education programme in the Nature Reserve is dedicated to the four seasons. This article summarizes the first day of activities of a group after the summer break. In October, the day is naturally dedicated to learn about the fall.

The children arrive in the morning and after spending some energy playing freely at the yard, they are gathered to listen to the teachers, the 2Bparks educator and the Nature Reserve staff explaining how the day will be like. It is also an opportunity to be reminded of the rules that apply to a visit to the protected area.



Starting the day at Monte do Paio

A first exercise is then to close their eyes and experience the sounds and silences of nature.

Afterwards they are divided in three groups and start walking around the

protected area to observe and identify the existing trees. The groups are accompanied by two teachers, the 2Bparks educator and the Nature Reserve staff.

The children are asked to reply to some questions such as:

- Is it a fruit tree or not?
- If it is a fruit tree does it have fruit in autumn?
- Are the leaves evergreen or deciduous?
- Are the leaves indented or not?



Observing the trees

Throughout the morning the children collect items that they find along the path that will be used in the afternoon activities. It can be sticks, leaves, fallen fruits, snails, small stones, etc.

The morning ends with a much appreciated activity: catching herbs to feed the ponies and donkeys.

After lunch, three ateliers happen in three different rooms: observing the autumn fruits, making an imaginary autumn tree and performing the autumn weather.



Feeding the ponies



Making an imaginary autumn tree



Exploring the autumn fruits

When observing and exploring the autumn fruits, the students focus on the shape, the colour, the texture and the size of the fruits. To explore the flavour of the fruits, one child is blindfolded and tries to guess which fruit it is that is being given to him to taste. Adjectives abound and the students learn about the outside and the inside of the autumn fruits. The teachers share some information on how to cook and eat those fruits and on how to use some of their medicinal properties.

Making an imaginary autumn tree proves to be great fun. The kids are given a bare tree trunk in a vase that they have to "dress" with all the items collected in the morning. The resulting three autumn trees are lively and beautifully decorated with leaves, fruits and flowers.

Finally, a third activity explores the ability of the children to act and perform autumn sounds and movements. Some children are told to behave like trees and some other children perform the wind that will blow and make the trees move and "dance". The autumn wind can be enjoyed after all.



The "children-trees"

It was a full day at the Nature Reserve and it is now time to go back.

The children have learned and experienced what autumn brings and have certainly begun to appreciate this season more.



Preparing to leave

Within a month it is time to come back to Monte do Paio for the next set of activities and to see how the environment has changed since October.



How will the imaginary tree look in November?

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