

## The Outdoor Environment - Montessori Style

Your greatest classroom is the outdoor environment. The link between the child and his/her own natural environment provides spontaneous moments for your child to learn and explore through mediums that are located right outside your door.

The child in the sensitive period for order (typically between the ages of three to six) loves to classify- this means to name. I'm sure when you are out walking you hear "What's that Mom/Dad?" They want to know specifically what everything is. In Botany, we actually give them very formal classifications of leaves by their shape like elliptical, reniform, and linear. As the child progresses out of this period, we get into the why. Why is that leaf shaped a certain way? What does it have in common with other leaves? What is the purpose of leaves-general and specific? The list goes on and on, based upon the child's own curiosity.

As parents, you should find time to talk these walks and explore natural surroundings. See the world through your child's eyes. Make sure the walks are long enough to engage your child-in other words, don't stop until completely satisfied and exhausted from the wonders in nature. Create a journal to record your observations and collect data....tell me your story so that I can post and share it with our parent community here at MRGC!