THINGS TO LOOK FOR OUTSIDE

Ideas listed in the Valley News

Looking for something to do with curious youngsters? Take a walk outside and see if you can find these NH favorites:

- **Wolly Bears**: Those fuzzy, black- and brown-banded caterpillars are active again. Contrary to common belief, their markings show the past weather, not the future. As a rule, the milder the past autumn, the broader the middle brown band. See if you can find a wolly bear and read its past.

- **Chipmunk burrows**: See if you can identify one or more burrow entrances. Leave a seed offering and wait to see if it is gathered.

- **Insect galleries**: Pull the bark off a log or dead tree and you are likely to find intricate patterns chiseled underneath. These are made by tunneling insects, probably beetle larvae. See if you can find different patterns underneath the bark of different logs.

- **Jelly fungus and other fungi**: Look for these gloppy fungi forms on logs and dead trees. Bright yellow to orange witches’ butter is easy to spot. You can also find turkey tail (dark with white on the edge) and other shelf mushrooms, and old puffball mushrooms (some can still be stomped to create a modest puff). How many different kinds can you find?

- **Red maple bud bouquets**: Red maples are a common, early blooming tree with easy to identify raspberry shaped buds. Cut a stem with a couple buds and stick this in a jar of water on a sunny windowsill to force an early bloom. Try other early blooming stems as well.

- **Moon close encounter**: On April 7, the moon will make its closest approach to Earth for the entire year, a mere 221,773 miles away; and lucky us this occurs on a full moon night. Get the binoculars and head outside for an amazing sight.