



# An Earth Day Par-tay

## Celebrate Earth Day, the Nature Cat Way

### Tally Ho!








Every year, on April 22, people around the world celebrate Earth Day by finding ways to both honor and help protect this great planet we live on. As a Nature Cat fan, you know to celebrate and protect the Earth **every** day. So how can you make Earth Day a stand-out nature-tastic, super special holiday? You can plan an Earth Day party the Nature Cat way!

Below are some Earth-friendly ideas for decorations, activities, party favors, and local actions you can take to help protect the natural world right outside your door. Ready, friend? Onward and 'let's celebrate Earth'-ward!






### What You'll Need

*Note: These are suggestions, but the goal here is to let your imagination and creativity lead the way to make nature-based party decorations and party favors.*

-  Natural materials for decorations (e.g., dried leaves, pinecones, acorns, shells, rocks, driftwood, or twisty twigs)
-  Collecting basket or container
-  Recording device (optional)
-  Earth-friendly paint (e.g., milk, chalk, or tempera paints)
-  String
-  Upcycled jars or bottles to use as vases
-  Additional craft supplies to have on hand: raffia ribbon, glue, upcycled packaging paper or paper bags, paint brushes, hole punch, safety scissors

### Party Favor Materials: Flower Seed Balls

-  Native to your area wildflower seeds: You can choose one kind of wildflower, or a variety. Visit [here](#) to find the best plants for where you live.
-  Potting soil
-  Air-dry clay (Check online or your local craft store.)



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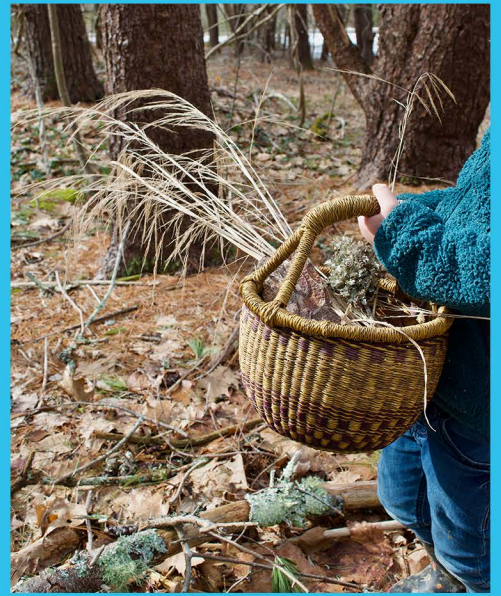
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## Let's Celebrate!

- Step One:** Gather your nature materials! With an adult, walk in nearby natural areas, such as a park, the woods, a beach, or even your backyard, to look for items you can use to decorate for your party. If you are visiting a public park or preserve, check the rules first to make sure you have permission to collect. Remember to take only what you need, and please do not take from live plants.

While you are out in nature, pause and tune in to the sounds around you. Use the [Nature Cat app](#) or another recorder to capture what you hear—the wind or rain on the leaves of a tree, the babble of a brook, the peep of a spring peeper, the drumming of a woodpecker, the crashing of waves, the coo of a pigeon, or the lilting song of a wood thrush. You can use the sounds you record to make a nature soundtrack for your party.

- Step Two:** After you are finished gathering your nature items and sounds, it's time to head home and get crafty! Here are some ideas for what you can make with your collected materials:



- Turn leaves into garland or streamers:** Gather the leaves you collected, and with your paint, give them some color or decorations on both sides. After they have dried, poke one small hole at the top of each leaf with a hole puncher or a sharp pencil. The hole should be large enough to fit your string through. Tie a fat knot at the very end of your string and then thread the first leaf, pushing it to the knot. Repeat until you have threaded all your leaves and tie a second knot to secure your streamer. *Tip: If you want to keep your leaves from sliding on the string, tie knots after each leaf you add.*

- Confetti time:** Another way to use your leaves is to make confetti. Paint your leaves a rainbow of colors. After the paint has dried, use your hole punch to make confetti. When it's party time, scatter the confetti as part of your decorations.

- Twiggy vases:** Tie a colorful piece of raffia ribbon around the rim of a mason jar and fill the jar with twigs of different lengths and shapes. An alternative is to use different shells or small rocks to fill the jar. You can add color by painting the shells or rocks.

- Nature mobiles:** Make an X with two sticks that are of similar length (at least one foot). Secure them together using string. Attach a second longer piece of string to your X by looping it under the sticks and tying the ends of the string together with a secure knot. This is how you will hang your mobile.

Cut four more pieces of string—different lengths are okay! Choose nature materials from your collection to add to the mobile, and build your mobile by adding one or more objects to each of your four pieces of string. When you are finished, secure each string to one of the ends of the two sticks and hang it up for all to see!



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 **Step Three:** Plan your activities! Earth Day is about celebrating and taking steps to protect nature. You can plan an outdoor nature-appreciation adventure at a nearby park or nature preserve. If you want to stay close to home, try a nature-based DIY activity.

Visit <https://pbskids.org/naturecat/diy> for ideas, such as building a nature obstacle course in your backyard or a nearby park, making a bug box or a bird feeder, creating nature art, or designing your own set of [pinecone pals!](#)


Or, below find some resources for actions you can take as part of your Earth Day extravaganza:

-  With your best nature pals and an adult or two, join a cleanup near you or plan your own. Find out more [here](#).
-  Plant trees! [Neighborhood Forest](#) provides free saplings for children across the United States through schools, libraries, and youth groups. For more resources on planting trees, visit the [Arbor Day Foundation](#) and [One Tree Planted](#).
-  Put on your community science cap and join a community science project. Download the [Seek by iNaturalist app](#), or visit [here](#) or [here](#) to find a project.



 **Step Four:** Choose a party favor to give to your guests. We suggest making seed balls to help local wildlife, including birds and pollinators. Try [this recipe](#) from the University of Illinois Extension.

When the seed balls are ready, assemble your party favors by placing each seed ball in its own small, breathable cloth bag (e.g., burlap) with instructions to throw or place the ball in a place where the seeds can grow. Secure each bag with a brightly-colored piece of raffia ribbon.

 **Step Five:** Don't forget to invite your best nature buddies!



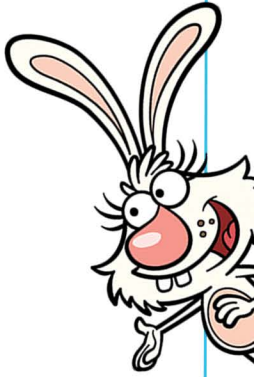
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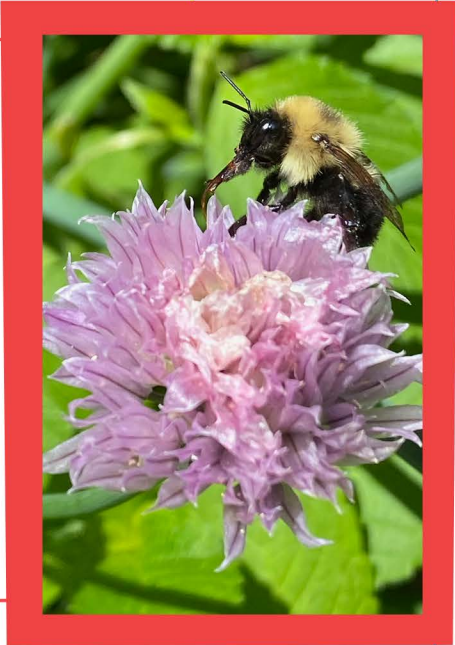




**Tips:**

We celebrate Earth Day in Spring, and Spring happens to be a very special time in nature. Dormant plants are growing again. New seedlings are poking through the ground. Bees and other important insects are emerging and foraging for food. New generations of animals are being born. For these reasons, among others, we suggest not taking from live plants. This includes picking flowers. Even flowers considered weeds, like dandelions and clover, are critical food sources for hungry bees and other pollinators.

Everything for your party may not come directly from nature—and that's okay! Other ways to make your Earth Day party nature-tastic include using reusable items for serving food and drinks; borrowing instead of buying new; recycling all items that can be recycled; and composting food, if that is available to you.



**Collaborators**

This Earth Day Part-tay activity was developed in collaboration with:



**CHICAGO REGION TREES INITIATIVE**  
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Lake County Forest Preserves



*McHenry County*  
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