

# LEARNING FROM THE LAKE

FROM THE GREAT LAKES AQUARIUM EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

JULY 2011

The Education Newsletter is a new monthly resource for families, educators, and naturalists alike! Every month, this newsletter will provide activities for families to do at home; phenology for the current month to keep you updated on migration patterns and happenings in nature; interesting facts relevant to the time of year; astronomical events; and family-friendly events happening around the Duluth area.

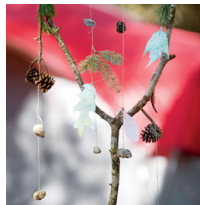
Watch for Education Newsletters each month! For inquiries on FREE subscriptions, contact Lindsay Brandt via email [lbrandt@glaquarium.org](mailto:lbrandt@glaquarium.org) or phone (218) 740-2027.

## Family Activity—Nature Mobile from familyfun.com

This summer will bring many opportunities for exploration and adventure! Showcase the treasures you find with a nature mobile.

What you need:

- ◆ Large branch
- ◆ Yarn or colorful string
- ◆ Tape or glue
- ◆ Nature objects (i.e. leaves, pinecones, or other treasures)



Anchor a large branch to your tent, front porch, or tree and hang the treasures you find with yarn or colorful string (tie, tape, or glue them in place). Then, at the end of the summer revisit your nature mobile to remind yourself of the many adventures you had!

## Phenology—July 2011 by MN Weatherguide

### First and Second Week

- ◆ Native basswood trees bloom.
- ◆ Young raccoons begin exploring.
- ◆ Bird songs will decrease after July 4th as nesting season is over.
- ◆ Field corn begins tasseling.
- ◆ Hosta blossoms provide a new source for nectaring hummingbirds.

### Third and Fourth Week

- ◆ House wrens continue to be vocal.
- ◆ Wild blueberries, raspberries and strawberries are ripe for picking.
- ◆ Cliff and barn swallows continue nesting.
- ◆ Wild rice is in full bloom and will be ripe by early autumn.

## Lake Superior Day—Did you know?!

Lake Superior Day is July 17th. Lake Superior is the only Big Lake with its own designated day—a day providing everyone an opportunity to celebrate the great lake with family-friendly events, activities, and programs.

Lake Superior Day originated in the 1990s with a group of Thunder Bay and Superior residents. This year is predicted to be the largest yet!

For more information on Lake Superior Day happenings, visit <http://www.superiorforum.net/index>.



### Get Outside: Poison Ivy 101

“Leaflets three, let it be” may be the phrase you learned to help avoid contact with this plant. Indeed, poison ivy has three-part leaves (pictured above), and can take the form of an upright shrub or climbing vine. The oil covering the leaves, called urushiol, is the culprit that leads to a painful, itchy rash.

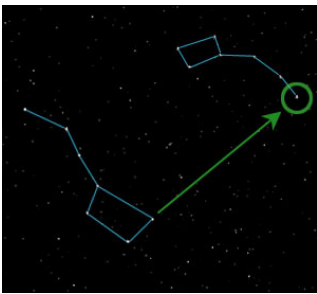
What can you do if you encounter poison ivy? Wash up! Use lukewarm water or even rubbing alcohol to *gently* remove the urushiol.

What if this treatment doesn't work? Keep your skin cool and dry. Avoid anti-itch creams—this could make the allergic reaction worse!

  
Great Lakes Aquarium

# July Astronomy

## Polaris, the North Star



Polaris is widely known for its dependability in guiding explorers on land and sea, alike. Polaris has acquired many aliases since ancient times, including the Steering Star, the Ship Star, Stella Maris (meaning “Star of the Sea”), and Kynosoura (Greek for “Dog’s Tail”). Polaris came into the English language as Cynosure, translating to “something that strongly attracts attention by its central position.”

As with all constellations and most stars, there are numerous mythological explanations surrounding Polaris’ origins. In Scandinavia, Norse gods created the Universe by sending their defeated enemies of war into the sky as stars (as trophies of war). To complete the Universe, they hammered an enormous spike into the center of the sky and made the sky revolve around it. A jewel adorns the top of the spike, forever situated in the sky as Polaris.

Ancient Arabs regarded Polaris an evil star because it was “least distant from the pole.” Polaris was suspected to be the star that had slain a great warrior of the sky, the Big Dipper. All the stars are believed to mourn their lost warrior and march slowly around the sky each night, a never-ending funeral procession. The villain, Polaris, is outcast from the procession and forever condemned to the coldest part of the northern sky.

Where is Polaris? The North Star is located at the end of the Little Dipper’s handle, or the tip of Little Bear’s tail (see image).


**Stay tuned for next month’s constellation: Sagittarius.**

## Family-Friendly Local Events

- July 4: Happy Birthday, America!
- July 5—28: Adventure Day Camp at Chester Bowl (see below)
- July 14—16: Big Top Chautauqua, “Keeper of the Light” in Bayfield, WI.
- July 14—16: Hermantown Summer Fest
- July 15—16: Experience the Night at Boulder Lake Environmental Learning Center
- July 15—18: Duluth Music and Maritime Fest
- July 17: Lake Superior Day
- July 20: Ice Cream Social at Fairlawn Mansion
- July 29—July 31: Silver-Beaver Bay Days
- July 30: Lake Superior Wooden Boat Festival in Superior, WI.

For more information on Adventure Day Camp at Chester Bowl, visit [www.chesterbowl.org](http://www.chesterbowl.org).

## JULY 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4 	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

## Educational Events at Great Lakes Aquarium

### Lake Superior Day Activities, July 17th

Celebrate Lake Superior Day! Join us in our mission to “inspire stewardship, understanding and exploration of the Great Lakes and their interconnection with global ecosystems” by honoring the world’s greatest of freshwater lakes.

### SCUBA Diving Camp, August 1st—4th

Explore the science behind diving and use newly-learned diving skills at an open warm water dive! Discover techniques, gear and diving safety with a PADI certified dive master. Divers will learn what happens to their body underwater, how the gear works, and what they will see. Pre-registration required. Registration deadline: Monday, July 18.

Contact Jillian Godfrey at [jgodfrey@glaquarium.org](mailto:jgodfrey@glaquarium.org) for more information or to register.