

# Briar Bush

## NATURE CENTER



# Summer Camp Guide

## 2026



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# Welcome to Briar Bush Nature Center's Summer Camp Program!

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Dear Families,

Thank you for considering Briar Bush Nature Center for your child's Summer Camp experience. Our 12.5 acres of forest serve as a rich oasis and perfect Summer Camp setting in the middle of the suburbs. We're looking forward to providing campers with memories full of excitement, new experiences, nature exploration, hands-on discovery, and all-around fun in the outdoors!

This document is a comprehensive source for Summer Camp 2026 and outlines our camp format, current offerings, registration process, policies and procedures, and more.

Please review all information provided in this document before registration and again before the start of camp to ensure that your child has a safe, healthy, and fun camp experience.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call Briar Bush Nature Center at 215-887-6603 or email Melissa Eldridge, Program and Summer Camp Director, at [melissa@briarbush.org](mailto:melissa@briarbush.org).

We're looking forward to seeing you and your child this summer!

Melissa Eldridge  
Program and Summer Camp Director  
Briar Bush Nature Center  
(215) 887-6603  
[melissa@briarbush.org](mailto:melissa@briarbush.org)

# Summer Camp Staff and Volunteers

We are very fortunate to have highly experienced educators who love what they do. Our Summer Camp staff pass a rigorous set of clearances, complete relevant trainings and certifications, and care about the health and safety of our campers. Staff members recognize that Summer Camp is a unique experience in a child's life and are dedicated to providing an exceptional experience for each child.

Year-round staff members lead Full-Day

Travel Camps for Ages 8-9 and Full-Day Travel Camps for Ages 10-12 while seasonal educators lead Seedlings Half-Day Camps for Ages 4-6 and Saplings Full-Day Camps for Ages 6-7 and assist with Travel Camps.

Our seasonal educators are typically college students or recent college graduates who are carefully selected after an extensive interview process is completed and all clearances have been passed. Their skills, character, experiences, and leadership add to the success of our Summer Camp program. If you are interested in joining our staff this summer, [click here](#) to review the Nature Camp Educator job description.



Camp Aides, teenage Summer Camp volunteers, accompany and assist educators throughout the summer. Their dedication, love of nature, and joy of working with children make all the difference in our Summer Camp program and in the life of each camper. If you are interested in joining our volunteer program this summer, [click here](#) for more information.

# Summer Camp Format

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## Camp Types

Summer Camps are organized by age group. Review the chart below for camp types and schedule.

Camp	Camp Start Time	Camp End Time
Seedlings Half-Day Camps for Ages 4-6		
AM Session	9:30am	12:00pm
PM Session	1:30pm	4:00pm
Saplings Full-Day Camps for Ages 6-7	9:30am	4:00pm
Full-Day Travel Camps for Ages 8-9	9:30am	4:00pm
Full-Day Travel Camps for Ages 10-12	9:30am	4:00pm
Overnight Camp for Ages 13-15	Monday – 9:30am-4:00pm Tuesday – 9:30am-Overnight Wednesday-Thursday – Overnight Friday – 4:00pm Pick-Up	

## Staff / Volunteer to Camper Ratio

Our Summer Camp groups have a maximum capacity of 6, 10, or 12 campers. Small groups help us to ensure more individualized attention and high-quality programming. Review the chart below for staff/volunteer to camper ratio per camp type.

Camp	Staff	Camp Aides	Campers
Seedlings Half-Day Camps for Ages 4-6	1	2	6
Saplings Full-Day Camps for Ages 6-7	2	2	12
Full-Day Travel Camps for Ages 8-9	2	1	12
Full-Day Travel Camps for Ages 10-12	2	1	12
Overnight Camp for Ages 11-15	2	2	10

# Summer Camp Offerings

## Camp Offerings 2026

Summer Camp is a partial summer program option. Each camp type offers five themes that repeat two or three times throughout the summer. Children cannot be registered for the same theme more than once as the programs are identical.

Review the chart below for the Summer Camp 2026 schedule. An asterisk (\*) denotes a four-day camp week. The following pages include more detailed camp offerings.

	<b>Seedlings Half-Day Camp for Ages 4-6</b>	<b>Saplings Full-Day Camp for Ages 6-7</b>	<b>Full-Day Travel Camp for Ages 8-9</b>	<b>Full-Day Travel Camp for Ages 10- 12</b>	<b>Overnight Camp for Ages 13-15</b>
<b>6/8-6/12</b>	Pond Explorers	X	X	X	X
<b>6/15-6/18*</b>	Bugs and Slugs	Junior Naturalists	Nature Explorers II	Forces of Nature	X
<b>6/22-6/26</b>	Naturally Artistic	Our Microscopic World	Wild Waterways	Outdoor Survival II	X
<b>6/29-7/2*</b>	Animal Superpowers	Solving Nature's Mysteries	Animals All Around II	Outdoor Adventure II	X
<b>7/6-7/10</b>	Sensing Nature	Where the Wild Things Wander	Primitive Skills	Aquatic Adventures	X
<b>7/13-7/17</b>	Pond Explorers	Earth Keepers	Six-Legged Science	Daring Camp for Girls	X
<b>7/20-7/24</b>	Bugs and Slugs	Junior Naturalists	X	X	Hickory Run State Park
<b>7/27-7/31</b>	Naturally Artistic	Our Microscopic World	Six-Legged Science	Daring Camp for Girls	X
<b>8/3-8/7</b>	Animal Superpowers	Solving Nature's Mysteries	Nature Explorers II	Outdoor Survival II	X
<b>8/10-8/14</b>	Sensing Nature	Where the Wild Things Wander	Wild Waterways	Forces of Nature	X
<b>8/17-8/21</b>	Pond Explorers	Earth Keepers	Primitive Skills	Outdoor Adventure II	X
<b>8/24-8/28</b>	Bugs and Slugs	Junior Naturalists	Animals All Around II	Aquatic Adventures	X



## Seedlings Half-Day Camp for Ages 4-6

AM Session: 9:30am-12:00pm | PM Session: 1:30pm-4:00pm

Adventurous and curious, preschoolers love to learn about nature through discovery and play. Each week, mini-lessons on the theme build campers' knowledge of natural concepts while games, crafts, hikes, animal encounters, and free-time to explore make learning tons of fun!

Seedlings Half-Day campers will participate in activities onsite at Briar Bush Nature Center. Most activities will directly relate to the camp theme, but campers can always look forward to general summer fun, animal encounters, guided hikes, pond exploration, and visiting the Bird Observatory regardless of the theme.

*Campers must be within the age range to participate. However, campers who turn 4 years of age up to one month after the camp start date will be eligible to register.*

*The five camp themes below repeat two or three times throughout the summer. Campers cannot be registered for the same theme more than once as the programs are identical. Campers registered for more than one week per theme will be removed from the duplicate week.*

*Campers can only participate in Seedlings AM OR PM (not both) during the same week as the programs are identical.*

### Pond Explorers

Instructor: Seasonal Staff

6/8-6/12	\$305.00	Resident: \$274.50	Member: \$244.00
7/13-7/17	\$305.00	Resident: \$274.50	Member: \$244.00
8/17-8/21	\$305.00	Resident: \$274.50	Member: \$244.00

Let's catch frogs and tadpoles, take a closer look at insects that live in the pond, make stream boats, and meet our aquatic turtles. Come join us at our pond and make a splash!

### Bugs and Slugs

Instructor: Seasonal Staff

6/15-6/18*	\$275.00	Resident: \$247.50	Member: \$220.00
7/20-7/24	\$305.00	Resident: \$274.50	Member: \$244.00
8/24-8/28	\$305.00	Resident: \$274.50	Member: \$244.00

Briar Bush is a paradise for creepy-crawlies! With magnifiers, microscopes, and our eyes, we'll take a closer look at these amazing, tiny creatures found on the trails.

## **Naturally Artistic**

Instructor: Seasonal Staff

6/22-6/26                    \$305.00            Resident: \$274.50            Member: \$244.00

7/27-7/31                    \$305.00            Resident: \$274.50            Member: \$244.00

Nature will be our inspiration this week as we create music and artwork reflecting the natural world and its inhabitants. Be sure to pack your creativity and imagination!

## **Animal Superpowers**

Instructor: Seasonal Staff

6/29-7/2\*                    \$275.00            Resident: \$247.50            Member: \$220.00

8/3-8/7                      \$305.00            Resident: \$274.50            Member: \$244.00

From birds to mammals to reptiles and more, Briar Bush is home to a variety of animals equipped with their own special superpowers. Come explore their amazing adaptations!

## **Sensing Nature**

Instructor: Seasonal Staff

7/6-7/10                    \$305.00            Resident: \$274.50            Member: \$244.00

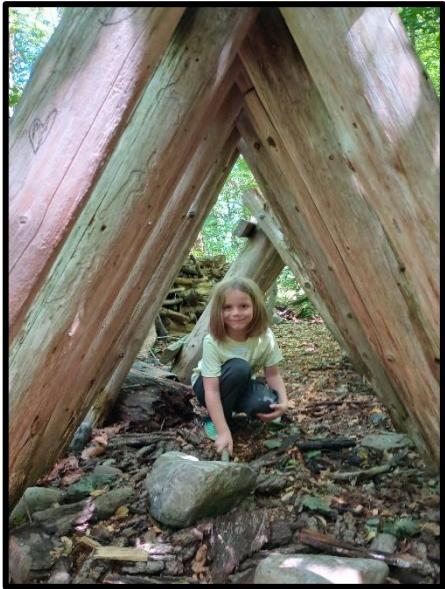
8/10-8/14                    \$305.00            Resident: \$274.50            Member: \$244.00

Use your senses to smell the flowers, observe animals, listen to bird song, and more! Your senses are your tools as you explore the wonders of nature at Briar Bush this week.

## **Extended Care**

Before Care is available for Seedlings Half-Day Camp – AM Session. After Care is available for Seedlings Half-Day Camp – PM Session. Registration for Extended Care is separate from Summer Camp Registration. You may register at the time of camp registration and up until the Thursday before the camp start date.

<b>Before Care</b>	<b>After Care</b>
8:30am-9:30am	4:00pm-5:30pm
\$30/week	\$45/week



## **Saplings Full-Day Camp for Ages 6-7**

9:30am-4:00pm

Join us for a full day of excitement, education, and exploration in the outdoors! Each week, lessons and activities build campers' knowledge of natural concepts while games, crafts, hikes, animal encounters, and free-play time to explore make learning tons of fun.

Saplings Full-Day campers will participate in activities onsite at Briar Bush Nature Center, but may also walk to Highland Elementary School to utilize the playground and field. Most activities will directly relate to the camp theme, but campers can

always look forward to general summer fun, animal encounters, guided hikes, pond exploration, and visiting the Bird Observatory regardless of the theme.

*Campers must be within the age range to participate. However, campers who turn 6 years of age up to one month after the camp start date will be eligible to register.*

*The five camp themes below repeat two or three times throughout the summer. Campers cannot be registered for the same theme more than once as the programs are identical. Campers registered for more than one week per theme will be removed from the duplicate week.*

### **Junior Naturalists**

Instructor: Seasonal Staff

6/15-6/18*	\$355.00	Resident: \$319.50	Member: \$284.00
7/20-7/24	\$440.00	Resident: \$396.00	Member: \$352.00
8/24-8/28	\$440.00	Resident: \$396.00	Member: \$352.00

Join us on a journey of exploration and education, and become a Junior Naturalist through hands-on discovery, nature journaling, animal encounters, and more!

### **Our Microscopic World**

Instructor: Seasonal Staff

6/22-6/26	\$440.00	Resident: \$396.00	Member: \$352.00
7/27-7/31	\$440.00	Resident: \$396.00	Member: \$352.00

Dig for the creatures that inhabit the soil, use a microscope to examine macroinvertebrates from the pond, and grab a magnifying glass to explore the tiny parts that make up a flower. Let's take a closer look at our microscopic world!

## **Solving Nature's Mysteries**

Instructor: Seasonal Staff

6/29-7/2\*                    \$355.00            Resident: \$319.50            Member: \$284.00

8/3-8/7                    \$440.00            Resident: \$396.00            Member: \$352.00

Follow tracks, dig up bones, and study nests as we investigate, collect, and analyze evidence to solve some of nature's mysteries. Get ready to become a Nature Detective this week!

## **Where the Wild Things Wander**

Instructor: Seasonal Staff

7/6-7/10                    \$440.00            Resident: \$396.00            Member: \$352.00

8/10-8/14                    \$440.00            Resident: \$396.00            Member: \$352.00

Get ready to explore the captive and wild animals at Briar Bush while learning about why their habitat is a suitable place to live. Together, we'll discover where the wild things wander!

## **Earth Keepers**

Instructor: Seasonal Staff

7/13-7/17                    \$440.00            Resident: \$396.00            Member: \$352.00

8/17-8/21                    \$440.00            Resident: \$396.00            Member: \$352.00

This week, we'll explore all of nature's wonder at Briar Bush! Look forward to nature play and exploration all while learning to care for our home.

## **Extended Care**

Before and After Care are available for Saplings Full-Day Camps. Registration for Extended Care is separate from Summer Camp Registration. You may register at the time of camp registration and up until the Thursday before the camp start date.

<b>Before Care</b>	<b>After Care</b>
8:30am-9:30am	4:00pm-5:30pm
\$30/week	\$45/week



## Full-Day Travel Camp for Ages 8-9

9:30am-4:00pm

Our Full-Day Travel Camps for Ages 8-9 involve the best of Briar Bush while introducing new offsite adventures to campers.

All camps include daily travel in the Briar Bush vans to regional sites relating to the camp theme. All field trip fees are included in the camp cost. Specific field trip locations and information will be provided in the Camp Itinerary emailed approximately three weeks in advance of the camp week. Be sure to assess your child's interests and abilities before registering as your child may not have the opportunity to sit out of activities.

*Full-Day Travel Camps for Ages 8-9 are not offered the week of July 20-24.*

*Campers must be within the age range to participate. However, campers who turn 8 years of age up to one month after the camp start date will be eligible to register.*

*The five camp themes below repeat twice throughout the summer. Campers cannot be registered for the same theme more than once as the programs are identical. Campers registered for more than one week per theme will be removed from the duplicate week.*

### Nature Explorers II

Instructor: Heidi Malizia

6/15-6/18*	\$455.00	Resident: \$409.50	Member: \$364.00
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8/3-8/7	\$565.00	Resident: \$508.50	Member: \$452.00
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Get ready for an unforgettable week as we explore the great outdoors through kayaking, indoor rock climbing, hiking, stream stomping in local waterways, visiting Crestmont Pool, and even building and testing your own wooden boat. Every day brings a new challenge, a new skill, and a new way to connect with nature!

### Wild Waterways

Instructor: Kyrstin Schwarz

6/22-6/26	\$510.00	Resident: \$459.00	Member: \$408.00
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8/10-8/14	\$510.00	Resident: \$459.00	Member: \$408.00
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The heat of the summer is the perfect time to explore local waterways. Come spray, splatter, wade, and wallow while we learn about the importance of water and the creatures that live in it! We'll even visit other nature centers to determine the health of the local watershed. Our week will be full of water from the places we go to the activities we do!

## **Animals All Around II**

Instructor: Katie Fisk

6/29-7/2\*                    \$390.00            Resident: \$351.00            Member: \$312.00

8/24-8/28                    \$485.00            Resident: \$436.50            Member: \$388.00

For this second edition, we'll learn about proper pet care, the importance of native plant habitats, and G.O.A.T. goats with the Philly Goat Project. We'll spend time with our animal ambassadors, aiding in their care, learning about enrichment, and getting some hands-on time with them, too!

## **Primitive Skills**

Instructor: Carter Johnson

7/6-7/10                    \$510.00            Resident: \$459.00            Member: \$408.00

8/17-8/21                    \$510.00            Resident: \$459.00            Member: \$408.00

Look forward to developing the skills of fire-making, shelter-building, and tool-making without the use of modern machinery. We'll take trips to local greenspaces, as well as Churchville Nature Center's Lenape Village, where we'll learn more and improve these primitive skills.

## **Six-Legged Science**

Instructor: Sarah Busby

7/13-7/17                    \$510.00            Resident: \$459.00            Member: \$408.00

7/27-7/31                    \$510.00            Resident: \$459.00            Member: \$408.00

Insects are the most abundant animals on earth; there are more insects than there are humans! In this camp, we'll take a closer look at our small but mighty neighbors as we catch and observe live insects, then learn how to preserve dead insects to study and display. We'll learn how to care for our very own insects, conduct friendly experiments, and use microscopes to gain a better understanding of these often-misunderstood critters!

## **Extended Care**

Before and After Care are available for Full-Day Travel Camps. Registration for Extended Care is separate from Summer Camp Registration. You may register at the time of camp registration and up until the Thursday before the camp start date.

<b>Before Care</b>	<b>After Care</b>
8:30am-9:30am	4:00pm-5:30pm
\$30/week	\$45/week



## Full-Day Travel Camp for Ages 10-12

9:30am-4:00pm

Our Full-Day Travel Camps for Ages 10-12 involve the best of Briar Bush while introducing new offsite adventures to campers.

All camps include daily travel in the Briar Bush vans to regional sites relating to the camp theme. All field trip fees are included in the camp cost. Specific field trip locations and information will be provided in the Camp Itinerary emailed approximately three weeks in advance of the camp week. Be sure to assess your child's interests and abilities before registering as your child may not have the opportunity to sit out of activities.

*Full-Day Travel Camps for Ages 10-12 are not offered the week of July 20-24.*

*Campers must be within the age range to participate. However, campers who turn 10 years of age up to one month after the camp start date will be eligible to register.*

*The five camp themes below repeat twice throughout the summer. Campers cannot be registered for the same theme more than once as the programs are identical. Campers registered for more than one week per theme will be removed from the duplicate week.*

### Forces of Nature

Instructor: Sarah Busby

6/15-6/18*	\$410.00	Resident: \$369.00	Member: \$328.00
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8/10-8/14	\$510.00	Resident: \$459.00	Member: \$408.00
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This week, campers will train in all terrains to master nature's forces of water, earth, fire, and air. Harness and bend the power of the elements to create art, conduct experiments, and complete challenges to bring these four nations together!

### Outdoor Survival II

Instructor: Carter Johnson

6/22-6/26	\$485.00	Resident: \$436.50	Member: \$388.00
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8/3-8/7	\$485.00	Resident: \$436.50	Member: \$388.00
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The most important tool in a survival situation is your brain and this camp is designed to put it to the test! Can you solve problems using only the clothes on your back, catch a fish with only a hook and piece of fishing line, or start a fire without matches? Both veterans and first-time Outdoor Survival campers will find this week both fun and challenging!

## **Outdoor Adventure II**

Instructor: Heidi Malizia

6/29-7/2\*                    \$455.00      Resident: \$409.50      Member: \$364.00

8/17-8/21                    \$565.00      Resident: \$508.50      Member: \$452.00

Looking for an adrenaline rush? Look no further! This year, we'll take it to the next level by exploring high ropes obstacles at TreeTrails Adventures, kayaking at Nockamixon State Park, stream-stomping, visiting Crestmont Pool, and hiking. You'll also build your own wooden scene with loose parts, hammer, and nails.

## **Aquatic Adventures**

Instructor: Kyrstin Schwarz

7/6-7/10                    \$510.00      Resident: \$459.00      Member: \$408.00

8/24-8/28                    \$510.00      Resident: \$459.00      Member: \$408.00

Let's get wet and wild as we explore local waterways and aquatic ecosystems! We'll spend the week collecting macroinvertebrates and exploring various waterways. We'll explore other local nature centers to discover the differences in aquatic environments and try out our adventurous side with aquatic activities. Things may get a little icy!

## **Daring Camp for Girls**

Instructor: Katie Fisk

7/13-7/17                    \$565.00      Resident: \$508.50      Member: \$452.00

7/27-7/31                    \$565.00      Resident: \$508.50      Member: \$452.00

Inspired by *The Daring Book for Girls* by Miriam Peskowitz, this camp is for those who identify as girls and have a spirit for adventure. Our daring girls will get outside building fires, using a slingshot, exploring a cave, learning archery, using power tools, and just being themselves!

## **Extended Care**

Before and After Care are available for Full-Day Travel Camps. Registration for Extended Care is separate from Summer Camp Registration. You may register at the time of camp registration and up until the Thursday before the camp start date.

<b>Before Care</b>	<b>After Care</b>
8:30am-9:30am	4:00pm-5:30pm
\$30/week	\$45/week



## Overnight Camp for Ages 13-15

Monday – 9:30am-4:00pm

Tuesday – 9:30am-Overnight

Wednesday-Thursday – Overnight

Friday – 4:00pm Pick-Up

There's no experience like an overnight camping experience! Campers will learn camping and naturalist skills and engage in teamwork and independence while exploring the great outdoors.

*Campers must be within the age range to participate. However, campers who turn 13 years of age up to one month after the camp start date will be eligible to register.*

### Overnight Camp for Ages 13-15 at Hickory Run State Park

Instructors: Mark Fallon and Kyrstin Schwarz

7/20-7/24                    \$645.00            Resident: \$580.50            Member: \$516.00

Join us for a memorable camping adventure at Hickory Run State Park! Campers come to Briar Bush on Monday, sleep at home, then stay overnight Tuesday-Friday. There's so much to do, we can't list it all: safe camping skills, night hikes, creek walks, waterfalls, swimming, songs, s'mores around the campfire, and more. Look forward to a week immersed in nature, teamwork, and self-reliance!

### Extended Care

Before and After Care are available for Overnight Camp. Registration for Extended Care is separate from Summer Camp Registration. You may register at the time of camp registration and up until the Thursday before the camp start date.

Before Care	After Care
Monday, Tuesday	Monday, Friday
8:30am-9:30am	4:00pm-5:30pm
\$12/week	\$18/week

# Camp Aide Volunteer Program

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## Camp Aide Volunteer Program for Ages 13+

Camp Aides are an important aspect of Briar Bush Nature Center's Summer Camp Program. Our Camp Aide Program is designed to give teens the opportunity to serve alongside Summer Camp staff while gaining naturalist, leadership, education, and communication skills; earning community service hours; building resume experience; and having a fun-filled summer.

Camp Aides will assist the counselors with camp preparation, group management, daily activities, camp cleanup, and more. Camp Aides are expected to model appropriate behavior and actively participate in games and activities, nature exploration, and camper support.



## Requirements

- Applicants must be 13+ years of age by June 1, 2026.
- Applicants must read the [Camp Aide Handbook](#) before applying.
- Camp Aides are required to:
  - attend Camp Aide Training
  - remain aware of and actively follow camp policies and procedures
  - understand and follow written/oral directions
  - exhibit strong communication skills and attention to detail
  - actively engage with counselors, fellow volunteers, and campers
  - remain attentive and responsive to counselor and camper needs
  - actively assist with and lead camp activities
  - remain with the camp group at all times
  - independently escort a group of campers from one location to another
  - complete other camp tasks independently
  - actively participate indoors and outdoors in a variety of weather conditions and terrain
  - stand, walk, lift, bend, crouch, kneel, reach at all levels; carry and move objects
  - communicate verbally; hear to perceive information at normal spoken word levels; receive detailed information through oral communications; make fine distinction in sound frequently

- observe surroundings with visual acuity (near vision, mid and far vision, depth perception, color perception, field of vision)
- Camp Aides may handle a variety of domesticated animals and non-releasable wildlife in camp programs (training provided).
- Applicants ages 18+ must obtain the appropriate clearances in order to be accepted for this position.

## **Camp Aide Application**

Interested? [Complete an application for consideration.](#)

The deadline for applications is Friday, March 6, 2026 at 5:00pm. All applications will be reviewed AFTER the deadline. You will be contacted approximately two weeks after the deadline regarding the program.

A maximum of 50 Camp Aides will be accepted for Summer 2026. As there is a limited number of positions and an overwhelming number of applications, please note that completing an application does not guarantee a Camp Aide position. Special consideration will be given to applicants based on previous experience as a Camp Aide, age-needs for camp groups, and flexibility in availability. Selected Camp Aides will be scheduled for one or two weeks of camp. Scheduled weeks with camp siblings or Camp Aide friends cannot be guaranteed.

Briar Bush Nature Center reviews applications without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or genetics.

# Summer Camp Registration

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## Registration Dates

Members-Only Registration begins at 12:00pm on Monday, January 26, 2026 for Friends of Briar Bush Members at the Household Level or above.

Registration opens to the public at 12:00pm on Tuesday, January 27, 2026.

Payment is due in full at the time of registration.

## Discounts

Friends of Briar Bush Members at the Household Level or above receive a 20% discount on our Summer Camp Programs. You may purchase a membership at the time of registration to take advantage of early enrollment and discounted fees.

Abington Township residents, who do not hold a current FOBB Household Membership, receive a 10% discount. Be sure to register your residency on your account to activate the discount on your order.

Discounts apply to camp fees only; extended care is not discounted.

## Preparing for Registration

As our Summer Camp Program is in high demand and has a limited number of spaces, camp sessions fill VERY quickly. In order to have the best chance of securing camp spaces, review the information below so that you are properly prepared to complete registration independently. Staff may be available to assist with registration over the phone, but the process will take longer, lowering your chances of securing camp spaces.

- In order to prepare for Summer Camp Registration, be sure to fully review the camp offerings and have your camp choices ready to go.
- If you do not already have an account within our online registration system, create an account, purchase a membership (see below), and practice navigating the system so you are prepared for registration.

- If you already have an account within our online registration system, be sure you have the correct User ID and Password. Practice logging into your account and check your membership status (see below).
- As most camps fill at the opening of Members-Only Registration, it may be in your best interest to purchase a FOBB Membership (at the Household Level or above) to have access to registration before the general public.
  - It is recommended to purchase a membership in advance of registration so you will just need to focus on signing waivers/policies and selecting camps at that time. This will also give you experience navigating the registration system in advance of registration day.

Please be aware that our camps fill VERY quickly and you may not be able to secure a camp spot even if you've purchased a membership and prepared in advance. If this is the case, join the waitlist during registration. We cannot guarantee spaces or exceed capacity.

## **Navigating Registration**

[Click here](#) to review step-by-step directions and watch tutorials on navigating Summer Camp registration in the online system. Review the notes below regarding registration considerations.

- Portions of registration are accessible as early as 12:01am, but camp weeks cannot be selected until the appropriate registration time. You may need to refresh your browser at the start of the registration time in order to access the remaining portions of registration.
  - Please note that inactivity of 30-minutes or more will delete registration progress and you will have to begin again.
- In order to register for Summer Camp during the Members-Only Registration period, you must be a current member at the Household Level or above. If you are not a current member at the time of registration, you must first add membership to your cart in order to access the program selection page.
- Although camp programs may be visible on the Session Events page, those programs may be at full capacity. When adding programs to the participant's schedule, take notice of whether you have been registered or waitlisted.
  - We highly encourage joining the waitlist as cancellations may occur, even as early as the day after registration began.
  - There is no cost to be added to the waitlist and you are under no obligation to register for waitlisted camps if they become available.

- Extended Care registration remains open until the Thursday before the next camp week. Focus on securing camp weeks before registering for Extended Care.
- Please understand that our small staff can only support up to four phone lines at a time and we do not have a phone queue. If you need immediate assistance with registration, call Briar Bush Nature Center at 215-887-6603. If your call is not answered immediately, call again rather than leaving a message. Do not email for urgent matters.
- For non-urgent matters (discount issues, waitlist position, extended care), please email Melissa Eldridge, Program and Summer Camp Director, at [melissa@briarbush.org](mailto:melissa@briarbush.org). These matters can be addressed after the initial wave of registration.

# Summer Camp Policies and Procedures

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## General

### **Summer Camp Financial Aid**

At Briar Bush Nature Center, we believe nature is for everyone. To apply for financial aid, submit an application and required materials as outlined on our website or call for a paper application.

U.S. Poverty Guidelines are used to determine eligibility to receive financial aid. Financial aid may be granted partially or in full. Financial aid is determined on a rolling, first-come-first-served basis until funding is dispersed or camp spaces have filled. It is recommended to apply for financial aid before registration opens.

As processing applications can take up to two weeks, applications submitted on 1/10/26 onward will be processed after Summer Camp Registration opens and will be determined based on eligibility and camp availability.

Briar Bush Nature Center reviews applications without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or genetics.

Briar Bush Nature Center reserves the right to refuse financial aid to any applicant. Briar Bush Nature Center has the right to terminate financial aid immediately if false information was presented.

### **Refund / Cancellation Policy**

If you transfer or cancel a Summer Camp program 15 days or more before its start date, you will receive an 80% refund (20% service fee). No transfers or refunds will be issued within 14 days of the program start date.

### **Abington Township Photo Policy**

On occasion, we may take photos or video of individuals enrolled in programs or using parks facilities. Please be aware that these images are for Township use and may be used in future promotional materials.

Briar Bush Nature Center is part of Abington Township Parks and Recreation Department. This policy must be acknowledged in order to register for Summer Camp.

## **Communications**

- Email
  - After Summer Camp registration, families will mostly be contacted by the Program and Summer Camp Director via email. Please add Melissa Eldridge, [melissa@briarbush.org](mailto:melissa@briarbush.org), as a safe sender in your email settings.
  - A Camp Itinerary including daily topics, general activities, and special instructions will be emailed approximately three weeks prior to each camp week. Review it carefully to ensure your camper is prepared for each camp day.
- Phone
  - Families may also be contacted by phone during the camp week. Please add Briar Bush Nature Center (215-887-6603) to your contacts. It is also suggested that you answer unknown phone numbers while your child is at camp as a staff member may contact you using their cell phone in the case of an emergency.

## **Health and Safety**

### **Behavior Policy**

Staff, volunteers, and participants deserve a safe and enjoyable camp experience. Campers are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior and follow the Summer Camp Rules as outlined in our Disciplinary Action Policy. Removal from the camp day/program is a possibility depending on the severity and continuation of unacceptable behavior.

Our Summer Camp is an inclusive program in which staff strives to accommodate campers and set them up for success. However, we may not have the capacity for all special medical, behavioral, or social support. Please reach out with questions regarding support for your child.

Please review the Summer Camp Behavior/Disciplinary Policies and Procedures outlined within this document.

### **Camper Autonomy / Assistance**

In order to participate in Summer Camp:

- All campers must be able to communicate their needs to camp staff.
- All campers must be potty-trained and capable of using the restroom on their own.
  - If a camper has a minor bathroom-related accident and needs assistance with changing, two staff members may assist the camper.

- If the camper has a major bathroom-related accident, parents/guardians will be contacted to assist the camper with clean-up and changing.
- All campers must be able to change themselves with minimal assistance.
  - If a camper needs assistance with changing, two staff members may assist the camper.

## Medical Concerns and Considerations

The health and safety of our campers is our top priority.

- Medical and Pick-Up Consent Form
  - After camp registration, the [Medical and Pick-Up Consent Form](#) must be completed and submitted through our online registration system.
  - A medical form must be completed for each camper before the start of the summer; campers without a completed form are not permitted to attend camp.
  - Only one form is required for the camp season.
  - If there are changes to the medical form, please contact Melissa Eldridge, Program and Summer Camp Director, at [melissa@briarbush.org](mailto:melissa@briarbush.org).
- Medical Conditions
  - If you list a medical condition on the medical form, we ask that you provide as much detail as possible.
  - If your child is being treated for a condition that is currently managed by a medical professional, you must submit an action plan provided by the medical staff.
  - If your child has food/environmental allergies, please note that Briar Bush Nature Center is a public facility and, as a result, not allergen-free.
    - Campers will eat together during snack and lunch periods and explore the facilities and grounds at Briar Bush and other locations (Travel Camps).
- Medications
  - Dispense any required medications to your child before camp begins.
  - If your child is required to take medication during the camp day, indicate your child's medications on the medical form. Your child must be able to self-administer medication.
- Accommodations
  - At Briar Bush Nature Center, we believe nature is for everyone. If your child requires accommodations while participating in the program, describe those accommodations on the medical form.

- Our Summer Camp is an inclusive program in which staff strives to accommodate campers and set them up for success. Please note that while our staff participates in trainings relating to various cognitive and behavioral conditions/disabilities, staff members are not behavioral intervention professionals and may not have the capacity for all special medical, behavioral, or social support.
- Please reach out with any questions regarding support for your child.

- Emergencies
  - Camp parents/guardians must be reachable by phone throughout the camp day.
  - Please add Briar Bush Nature Center (215-887-6603) to your contacts.
  - It is also suggested that you answer unknown phone numbers while your child is at camp as a staff member may contact you using their cell phone in the case of an emergency.

- Illness
  - If your child isn't feeling well, please keep them home and report the absence.
  - Campers must be fever-free for 24-hours before returning to camp.
  - If your child isn't feeling well while at camp, we will notify you and early pick-up may be necessary.

- Poison Ivy/Ticks
  - While exploring in nature, campers may encounter poison ivy and/or ticks. Our staff is knowledgeable in locating both hazards and treating them.
  - We will conduct daily tick checks during camp, but parents/guardians must check campers for ticks at home.

## **Severe Weather**

In the case of rain, campers will put on their rain gear and keep exploring! We seek shelter in heavy rain, thunderstorms, and excessive heat. We will contact families in the event of camp cancellation or early dismissal due to extreme weather conditions.

## Camp Day Logistics

### **Camper Drop-Off / Pick-Up**

A carline drop-off is implemented for Summer Camp. Parents/guardians will enter the driveway and loop around to the Pavilion to begin the drop-off process with camp staff. Drop-off will begin 15-minutes before the camp start time.

A carline pick-up is implemented for Summer Camp. It is policy for our staff to check photo ID at pickup. If you need to pick-up early or have another adult pick-up who is not on the authorization list, you must contact the Program and Summer Camp Director. Parents/guardians of campers who need assistance settling into the car and buckling up will be asked to park.

Please respect the drop-off/pick-up schedule. A fee of \$5.00 will be charged for every 15 minutes you are late to pick-up.

<b>Camp</b>	<b>Drop-Off Time</b>	<b>Pick-Up Time</b>
Seedlings Half-Day Camps for Ages 4-6		
AM Session	9:15am-9:30am	11:45am-12:00pm
PM Session	1:15pm-1:30pm	3:45pm-4:00pm
Saplings Full-Day Camps for Ages 6-7	9:15am-9:30am	3:45pm-4:00pm
Full-Day Travel Camps for Ages 8-9	9:15am-9:30am	3:45pm-4:00pm
Full-Day Travel Camps for Ages 10-12	9:15am-9:30am	3:45pm-4:00pm
Overnight Camp for Ages 11-15	Check registration for schedule.	

### **Extended Care**

Before Care is offered from 8:30am-9:30am. After Care is offered from 4:00pm-5:30pm. Registration for Before and/or After Care is required prior to the scheduled camp week; you may register for Before/After Care at the time of registration and up until the Thursday before the camp start date. Extended Care for Overnight Camp is prorated.

Please respect the scheduled drop-off and pick-up times of Extended Care. After Care pick-up after 5:30pm will result in a late fee of \$5.00 for every 15 minutes you are late to pick-up.

### **Clothing and Packing List**

Campers must be appropriately dressed for camp. Your child must dress for outdoor play in all types of weather – it's nature camp and we're going to get wet and dirty! Your child must wear

comfortable clothing and closed-toed shoes/sandals. Flip-flops and other open-toed shoes are not permitted due to safety concerns.

Send your child to camp with a backpack complete with:

- A filled, reusable water bottle between 20oz-32oz
  - Reusable water bottles are required for every camper as we refill water bottles repeatedly throughout the day.
- Many snacks
  - Seedlings Half-Day campers are scheduled for one snack period.
  - Campers in all other camp groups are scheduled for two snack periods and a lunch.
- A lunch (full-day)
  - Lunches cannot be refrigerated or microwaved.
- A full set of extra clothes
  - This includes shirt, shorts/pants, underwear, socks, etc.
- A pair of water-only closed-toed shoes/sandals
- Rain gear such as a rain jacket and rain boots
- A plastic bag for wet/dirty clothing
- Insect repellent and sunscreen
  - Apply sunscreen and insect repellent to your child before arriving at camp each day. If you need to apply it to your child at Briar Bush, please park and apply outside of the Center as the products may irritate the animals in the Museum. Your child may reapply sunscreen and/or insect repellent during the camp day.

Special clothing requests, if any, will be included in the Camp Itinerary.

Personal items such as games, toys, electronics, etc. must be left at home. There is a high probability that personal items will get lost or broken during camp. Briar Bush Nature Center is not liable for lost, stolen, or broken personal items.

## **Activities and Field Trips**

Seedlings Half-Day and Saplings Full-Day Camps will participate in activities onsite at Briar Bush Nature Center. Most activities will directly relate to the camp theme, but campers can always look forward to general summer fun, animal encounters, guided hikes, pond exploration, and visiting the Bird Observatory regardless of the theme. Saplings Full-Day Camp may also walk to Highland Elementary School to utilize the playground and field.

Campers in Full-Day Travel Camps for Ages 8-9 and Full-Day Travel Camps for Ages 10-12 will participate in some activities at Briar Bush, but will mostly travel in our 15-passenger vans to regional places of interest to participate in activities such as hiking, kayaking, creek-walking,

farm tours, and more. These camp groups may also visit the Crestmont Pool during the week. Specific field trip locations will be listed in the Camp Itinerary. Fees for travel and regional field trip admission are included in the camp cost. Camp staff drive Briar Bush's 15-passenger vans, while the Camp Aides help to make the ride enjoyable for the campers by playing games, reading stories, etc. All passengers are required to wear seatbelts. If your child requires a booster seat, please indicate this on the medical form.

Campers in Overnight Camp for Ages 13-15 attend camp at Briar Bush on Monday following typical drop-off (9:15am-9:30am) and pick-up (3:45pm-4:00pm) schedules, then camp overnight at Hickory Run State Park from Tuesday through Friday. Campers are dropped-off at Briar Bush on Tuesday (9:15am-9:30am), then travel in the Briar Bush van to Hickory Run State Park. On Friday, campers travel back to Briar Bush in time for pick-up (3:45pm-4:00pm). Families will receive a Camp Itinerary complete with a schedule, menu, and packing list approximately three weeks in advance of the camp week. Fees for travel, lodging, and food are included in the camp cost.

Be sure to assess your child's interests and abilities before registering for camp as your child may not have the opportunity to sit out of certain activities.

## **Special Treats**

Camp staff may distribute a treat to campers, such as popsicles, at the end of each camp week. Camp families may decide to provide treats to campers for their child's birthday. If your child is unable to consume treats provided by Briar Bush Nature Center and/or camp families, please indicate this on the medical form. You may be asked to provide a substitute so your child can participate.

# Summer Camp Behavior/Disciplinary Policies and Procedures

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## Behavior Expectations / Rules

Staff, volunteers, and participants deserve a safe and enjoyable camp experience. Campers are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior and follow the Summer Camp Rules at all times.

The Summer Camp Rules include:

1. Respect yourself, others, nature, and property.
2. Listen to your leader and follow directions.
3. Stay with your group.

Any behavior that inherently conflicts with the first rule is considered inappropriate behavior.

## Accommodations / Support

Our Summer Camp is an inclusive program in which staff strives to accommodate campers and set them up for success. However, we may not have the capacity for all special medical, behavioral, or social support. If your child has one-on-one support in the classroom, we encourage that the support continues during Summer Camp. Please reach out with questions regarding support for your child.

## Disciplinary Procedures

Camp staff will provide positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviors such as granting verbal praise/recognition, offering small rewards such as high-fives or stickers, awarding special privileges, etc.

Examples of inappropriate behaviors are listed below, but this is not an extensive list.

- **Level 1:** Disruptive behaviors
  - Offenses: Interrupting the educator, disrupting activities, ignoring directions, etc.
- **Level 2:** Inappropriate behaviors
  - Offenses: Disrespect toward staff/volunteers/participants/animals, defiance/non-compliance toward staff/rules/regulations, refusal to follow directions/group, inappropriate gestures/language, misuse of property, etc.

- **Level 3:** Aggressive/threatening behaviors that endanger the wellbeing of self, staff/volunteers, participants, and/or animals
  - Offenses: Hitting, kicking, shoving, pushing, bullying, threatening language, damaging property, etc.

Depending on the repetition or severity of a behavior, a particular step or steps may be skipped. Removal from the camp day or camp program as a whole is a possibility depending on the severity or continuation of inappropriate behavior. Camp fees are non-refundable if a child is removed from a camp day or the camp program.

	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Offense</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Offense</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Offense</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Offense +</b>
<b>Level 1</b>	Redirection Verbal Warning	Verbal Warning	Loss of Privilege / Removal from Activity Notice to Parents/Guardians	Discussion with Camp Director Discussion with Parents/Guardians
<b>Level 2</b>	Verbal Warning	Loss of Privilege / Removal from Activity Discussion with Camp Director Discussion with Parents/Guardians	Discussion with Parents/Guardians Removal from Camp Day / Removal from Camp Program (non-refundable)	
<b>Level 3</b>	Discussion with Parents/Guardians Removal from Camp Program (non-refundable)			

The disciplinary procedures are described below.

- **Redirection**

- The educator will attempt to redirect the camper and inappropriate behavior by conducting verbal or non-verbal phrases/gestures, standing near off-task camper, asking self-correcting questions, involving/engaging off-task camper in an activity, etc.

- **Verbal Warning**

- The educator will acknowledge the inappropriate behavior and demand that it stops immediately. The educator will describe the appropriate behavior that is expected and inform the camper that loss of privilege or removal from activity will occur if the inappropriate behavior continues.

- **Loss of Privilege / Removal from Activity / Notice to Parents/Guardians**

- If the inappropriate behavior continues, the educator will remove a privilege or remove the camper from an activity.
  - Loss of Privilege may include the inability to use toys, games, or props; sitting next to a friend; etc.
  - Removal from Activity may include the inability to participate in an upcoming lesson, game, or activity.
- The educator will record the incident and action taken. The Program and Summer Camp Director will inform parents/guardians of the incident.

- **Discussion with Camp Director / Discussion with Camp Parents**

- If the inappropriate behavior continues, the educator will send the camper to speak with the Program and Summer Camp Director. The Program and Summer Camp Director will discuss the behavior with parents/guardians as well as the next steps moving forward.
- The educator and Program and Summer Camp Director will record the incident and action taken.

- **Removal from Camp Day / Removal from Camp Program**

- A Level 3 Offense or continued inappropriate behavior may result in Removal from Camp Day or Removal from Camp Program.
- The Program and Summer Camp Director will discuss the behavior with parents/guardians as well as the next steps moving forward.
- Refunds are not issued after Removal from Camp Day or Removal from Camp Program.

# Briar Bush Nature Center

## Summer Camp Preparation Checklist

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Before the first day of Summer Camp, please be sure these tasks are completed:

- Complete the [Medical and Pick-Up Consent Form](#).
- Reread the *Briar Bush Nature Center Summer Camp Guide*.
- Review the Camp Itinerary for the camp week.
- Pack a backpack complete with:
  - a filled, reusable water bottle between 20oz-32oz
  - one snack (Half-Day Camps) / many snacks and lunch (Full-Day Camps)
  - a full set of extra clothes and shoes
  - a plastic bag for wet/dirty clothing
  - rain gear
  - water-only closed-toed shoes/sandals
  - insect repellent
  - sunscreen
  - medication (if needed).

If you have any questions or concerns, please call (215) 887-6603  
or email [melissa@briarbush.org](mailto:melissa@briarbush.org).