

# Toddlers view nature curiously

**W**ALKING with young children can be interesting for all. It is amazing what they can find in ordinary places.

To the eyes of a toddler, everything is new and boredom is unknown. Just walking down the sidewalk precipitates several stops where ants are crawling in the cracks.

Being much closer to the ground helps them see things that adults miss. But most of the time, I feel it's their innocent curiosity that directs them.



nature  
**Timothy Nowicki**

**WHILE WALKING** around the block the other day, my son stopped to investigate a fallen apple the size of a ping-pong ball. Most of it was green, but a portion was brown from decay.

He picked it up to see what it was. The movement must have stimulated an ant to exit the apple. It crawled onto his thumb and then back on the apple trying to figure

out where land had gone to. We put that apple down so the ant could find its home, but in the time it takes to blink an eye my son had another one. It was larger but was half eaten. We saw small grooves in the meat of the apple. Last night a small deer mouse must have been nibbling on it.

Investigating this apple reminded me of the many wild apple trees I have seen in meadows and along fence rows. Fruit that had fallen to the ground often showed signs of both mice and ants. In rural areas, deer tracks were frequently seen beneath the tree.

**THE APPLE** tree in the fence row was probably planted by one of 25

different species of birds that regularly feed on apples.

Sometimes the seeds pass through their digestive systems untouched. Interesting that there are some seeds that must pass through the digestive system of an animal in order to be softened before germination can occur.

In our neighborhood, squirrels, skunks, opossum, rabbits and raccoons may also feast on the fallen apples. As they lie on the ground, slugs and bacteria will use the nutrients stored in the apple.

And even as the decaying apple disappears into the ground, earthworms will feed on the nutrients absorbed into the soil.



A deer mouse left grooves where he had chewed on the fallen apple.

## DeLorean wins suit

A Birmingham tax attorney has been ordered to pay \$734,377 to former auto magnate John Z. DeLorean because the attorney missed a filing deadline for the return of an overpayment on DeLorean's 1982 federal income tax.

Oakland Circuit Judge James S. Thorburn ordered tax attorney Frank S. Shaler to pay DeLorean the money because Shaler did not file within the required time for the return of \$700,127 in overpayment.

Shaler declined to comment when contacted at his Birmingham office. He is ordered to pay DeLorean \$700,127 plus \$34,250 in interest.

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