



How to...



WOW!

There are about 91,000 insect species in the US, including 11,500 species of moths and butterflies.

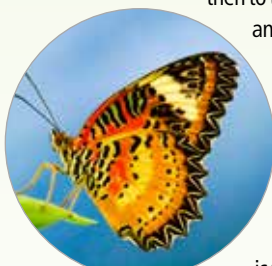
Take incredible pictures of nature

Find out how to capture the beauty of the natural world.

Nature photography is about documenting natural elements, from wildlife to flowers to landscapes. You can be a nature photographer anywhere, with a camera or with a phone. "Photography is really an adventure in paying attention. The more curious you are, the more interesting your pictures will become," said professional photographer Ami Vitale, one of the judges of *The Week Junior's* Nature Photo Contest. (See the box at right for more on our judges and the next page for details about the contest.) Here's how to get started.

Choose a location

Decide where you would like to take your photos. That could be a yard, your neighborhood, or a local park. When you get there, explore the surroundings. "Peek through leaves, look into puddles, follow shadows, and notice tiny details that most people walk right past," says Vitale. If you look carefully, you might spot a squirrel with an acorn, a butterfly on a leaf, or mushrooms at the base of a tree.



Zoom in for a close-up!

Use light to your advantage

You can experiment with taking photos in different kinds of weather. A cloudy day may provide a moody backdrop to your pictures, while sunlight dancing on a

lake may create a dazzling photo. One of the best times to shoot is early morning or later afternoon, when the sun is low in the sky. "Photographers call this the golden hour because everything seems to glow," Vitale says.

Vary your angles

Decide what you do and don't want to see inside the frame of your shot. When you're about to take your photo, look through the viewfinder of your camera or the screen of your phone. Turn the camera a little to the right, then to the left. Observe how this changes the shot and whether one side looks better. "Get down on the ground and look at the world through an ant's point of view," says Vitale. Point your camera toward the sky to capture that vantage point as well.

Keep experimenting

The best way to be a better photographer is to take more pictures. Photography is also about understanding the natural world. "Stay curious and be patient. "Learn about the subjects you're photographing," says Vitale. You could research local birds you see or find out what wildflowers are native in your area. "The best photographers aren't necessarily the ones with the best equipment. They're the ones who care deeply and keep showing up."

Meet our judges

Jesse Burke

He documents his family's life on their farm, where they raise hens, pigs, and Flemish giant bunnies. He also captures the relationship between people and nature. See his work at jesseburke.com.



Angela Ledyard

She was drawn to photography after watching her grandparents take photos. Her subjects range from sunrises to the Milky Way. See her work at angelaledyard.com.



Ami Vitale

She is considered one of the most influential conservation photographers in the profession and explores connections between people and the planet. See her work at amivitale.com.

