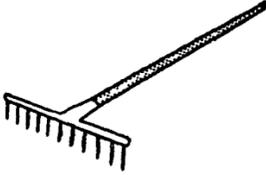


Mid's KOrner

FUN BUG by RANDS

BY ADDING AND SUBTRACTING OBJECTS AND LETTERS, SPELL THE NAME OF SOMETHING TO EAT.

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Al Smith Pastors Service 3-1-81 ANSHZR: CAKE

Singing toads evolve from legless 'fishy' tadpoles

One of the surest signs of spring and summer can be heard any warm evening at the edge of a pond or puddle: the surprisingly sweet trill of the toad.

Not only is the toad a better singer than many birds, but its metamorphosis from an aquatic tadpole into an insect-eating terrestrial creature in just two months is one of the miracles of nature.

Toad life is dependent upon the spring vocalizing. According to Ranger Rick's Nature Magazine, there are more than 200 different kinds of toads in the world, and each one sings its own mating song. The male toad inflates its throat sac like a miniature balloon and forces air through the vocal chords to produce a trill that can be sustained for up to half a minute.

The female toads, most of which don't sing, can't resist the males' songs. The females lay thousands of jelly-coated eggs in long strips, which the males then fertilize.

About four days later, tiny tadpoles emerge from the eggs and must now escape such enemies as fish, birds, and snakes, explains the National Wildlife Federation's monthly publication for children.

Tadpoles are equipped with gills which extract oxygen from the water. About one-inch in length, with rounded heads and long, wiggling tails, they look more like fish than toads. They feed on water



Oak Toad

plants, which they devour with file-like teeth.

Gradually, the tadpole leaves its strictly aquatic life behind for that of a land-dwelling toad. The first signs of this metamorphosis are two bumps that appear near the tadpole's tail. "The stumps slowly grow into hind legs," explains Ranger Rick. "Soon the front legs appear in the same way. The tadpole swims with its back legs now, as its tail begins to shrink."

Scientists believe that the tadpole actually absorbs its tail for nourishment. As the legs develop and the tail shrinks, the tadpole also loses its gills and develops lungs for breathing air.

When the young toad crawls from the water, it has a voracious appetite. "It has lost its teeth and its taste for plants," says Ranger



Says the back gorilla who wants to go out and play to the front gorilla, "Get out of my way." Replies the front gorilla who got to bed late, is still sleepy and stretching, "Let me alone. I'm still tired." He then rolls over and goes to sleep.

This is the wining caption sent in by Jason

Martin of Wernersville. Our judge, picking from a stack of terrific captions, chose this caption to have the most appropriate thoughts for the gorillas. Second place went to Isaiah Glick of Lancaster who wrote, "Ah, why did we stay out so late last night?"

Rick.

"Its nibbling mouth has changed to a wide, snapping one with along, sticky tongue for catching insects and other small animals." A hungry toad is always a welcome sight in a garden, for they eat up to 10,000 insects in one summer.

They range in size from the huge Colorado River toad, bigger than a human hand, to the petite oak toad, which barley covers a thumbnail and is the smallest found in North America.

Toads do not return to the ponds where their lives began until they are three or four years old.

