

Free Science & Nature at Home

THE QUICK VERSION

- 1 For space, install the free NASA app or visit nasa.gov for live feeds and images.
- 2 For science and nature programs, install the free PBS app on your phone, tablet, or TV.
- 3 For birds, install the free Merlin Bird ID app and watch the Cornell Lab's live cams.
- 4 For documentaries, remember your library's free Kanopy and Hoopla carry many.
- 5 Explore on a tablet for comfort, or get it onto the TV for the grandchildren.
- 6 Install only the official apps from the app store; the real ones never demand payment.

Stuck? Call or text Bill — real help, no rushing.

Call or text: (330) 200-8042

Book a visit: billshometech.com/book · \$99 flat first visit



Free Science & Nature at Home: NASA, PBS & More

NASA, PBS and the great nature projects -- live space, wild life and wonder, free on your screen

————— An Extended Guide · No. 1910 · NO. LE-20 —————

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

Bill Davis — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · bill@billshometech.com · Atwater, Ohio

Book a visit — billshometech.com/book

What's Inside

Everything in this guide, with page numbers. Skip to whichever chapter answers your question right now.

1. Read this first — the universe and the natural world, free on your screen	5
2. The short version	5
3. Why this is worth your while	6
4. NASA: space, free and live	6
5. PBS: beloved science and nature programs	7
6. The Cornell Lab: birds, live and identified	8
7. Nature and science documentaries, free	8
8. Joining in: gentle citizen science	9
9. Stargazing apps: naming the night sky	9
10. Getting it onto the big television	10
11. Getting started, step by step	10
12. The great space telescopes	11
13. The oceans and the creatures of the deep	11
14. Gardens, plants, and the growing world	12
15. The human body and health science	12
16. Keeping a nature notebook	13
17. Science and nature with the grandchildren	13
18. The weather and our planet, live	14
19. Science you can do with a phone	14
20. Making a habit of wonder	15
21. Zoo and safari cameras, live	15

22. Following a space mission	16
23. If a feed will not load	16
24. Two ways people come to this — and both are fine	17
25. Setting it up for a parent	17
26. Keeping it safe and free	18
27. Common mistakes	18
28. Common questions	19
29. Is all of this really free?	19
30. What is the easiest thing to start with?	19
31. Can the grandchildren watch safely?	20
32. Can Merlin really name a bird from its song?	20
33. Can I watch this on my television?	20
34. The quick recap	21
35. You do not have to do this alone	21
A Picture to Follow Along	23
A Second Look	24
A Note From Bill	24
Your Visit — and My Promise	25

WELCOME

1. Read this first — the universe and the natural world, free on your screen

NASA, PBS, and the great nature projects put science and the outdoors online for free — no subscription, and wonderful to share with a grandchild.

Here is the whole idea: some of the best science and nature in the world is free to watch and explore from home. NASA shows you live views of Earth and space; PBS offers its beloved science and nature programs through a free app; and projects like the Cornell Lab stream live cameras of birds at the nest. None of it costs a thing, and all of it is a joy to share with the grandchildren.

You do not need to be a scientist or a whiz with gadgets. If you can open an app or type a web address, you can watch a rocket launch, identify the bird at your feeder, or follow a nature documentary — all for free, on a phone, tablet, computer, or television.

I am Bill, from Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. Of all the free things a screen offers, this is among the most wholesome: curiosity, wonder, and the natural world, with no ads for the children and no bill for you. This guide shows you where to look and how to begin.

TIP

Start with whatever delights you most — the stars, the birds, the oceans. Follow your own curiosity; there is no order you must go in and nothing you need to know first.

THE SHORT VERSION

2. The short version

A few free apps and websites, and the wonders begin.

If you would like the whole thing in a nutshell before we slow down, here it is.

- 1 For space, install the free NASA app or visit nasa.gov for live feeds, images, and videos.
- 2 For science and nature programs, install the free PBS app on your phone, tablet, or TV.
- 3 For birds, install the free Merlin Bird ID app and visit the Cornell Lab's live bird cams.
- 4 For documentaries, remember your library's free apps (Kanopy and Hoopla) carry many.
- 5 Explore on a tablet for comfort, or cast it to the television for the grandchildren.

That is the whole routine. Everything after this page is simply detail — what each one offers, how to get it onto the big screen, and how to make an afternoon of it with a child.

GOOD TO KNOW

Programs, live feeds, and what is available come and go over time. Treat each visit as a fresh look, and do not be surprised to find something new.

WHY IT MATTERS

3. Why this is worth your while

Free wonder for you, and the best kind of screen time for the grandchildren.

There is a particular pleasure in curiosity that does not fade with age. Watching the Earth turn beneath a space station, learning why the leaves change, seeing a hawk feed its young — these are quiet joys, and they are all free. For a retired mind that still loves to learn, it is a gift.

It is also the finest sort of time to spend with a grandchild. Instead of the usual cartoons and the endless advertisements aimed at children, you can watch a real rocket launch together, or identify the birds in the yard, or follow a nature program about the oceans. It is screen time that teaches and that you can enjoy side by side.

And it costs nothing. In a world where every service seems to want a monthly fee, the great science and nature institutions mostly give their wonders away, because sharing knowledge is their whole purpose.

NASA

4. NASA: space, free and live

The cosmos, straight from the space agency, at no cost.

NASA, the United States space agency, is wonderfully generous online. Through its free app and its website at nasa.gov, you can watch live video from the International Space Station, follow rocket launches as they happen, browse breathtaking images from telescopes, and watch short films about planets, stars, and missions. It is all free and free of advertising.

A favorite with many is the live view of Earth from orbit — the planet turning slowly below, oceans and clouds and city lights. It is strangely calming to leave on. NASA also has a

steady stream of new pictures, so there is always something fresh to see, from distant galaxies to the surface of Mars.

For a grandchild who loves space, there is nothing better. Watching a launch countdown together, then the rocket rising, is a memory that costs nothing to make.

GOOD TO KNOW

Install the free NASA app for the easiest way in on a phone or tablet. For the live view of Earth from the space station, search 'NASA live' and leave it running — it is a lovely, quiet companion.

PBS

5. PBS: beloved science and nature programs

NOVA, Nature, and more, through a free app.

PBS, public television, has made science and nature programs for generations — NOVA, Nature, and many others. Today you can watch a great deal of it free through the PBS app on a phone, tablet, or smart TV, and on the PBS website. There are some advertisements and a members' tier for extra viewing, but a large amount is free to all.

These are the gold standard of gentle, intelligent television: an hour on the life of elephants, the workings of the brain, the history of an invention. They are made for curious grown-ups and are perfectly suitable for children too. For anyone who grew up trusting public television, it is a familiar, welcome friend online.

Your local PBS station in Northeast Ohio takes part as well, so supporting or signing in through it is a nice way to keep good television going.

GOOD TO KNOW

The PBS app is free to install and carries a generous amount of NOVA, Nature, and other programs at no charge. A members' tier adds more, but you can enjoy plenty without paying.

BIRDS

6. The Cornell Lab: birds, live and identified

Watch birds at the nest, and name the one at your feeder.

If birds bring you joy, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology is a treasure, and it is free. It streams live cameras trained on nests and feeders around the world — an eagle's eyrie, a tropical feeding station, an owl box — so you can watch real birds going about their lives at any hour. It is as soothing as a fireplace and endlessly surprising.

The Lab also offers the free Merlin Bird ID app, which is a small marvel. It can identify a bird from a photo you take, or even from its song: hold up your phone in the yard, and it names the birds it hears singing around you. For anyone who has ever wondered 'what is that bird?', it feels like magic.

Between the live cameras and the identifier, a bird feeder outside the window and a free app can fill many happy hours. It is a hobby that costs nothing and grows richer the more you notice.

GOOD TO KNOW

Install the free Merlin Bird ID app and try its 'sound ID' in the yard. Hold the phone up while the birds sing, and it lists them by name — a delight for anyone who feeds the birds.

DOCUMENTARIES

7. Nature and science documentaries, free

Hours of wonder through apps you may already have.

Beyond NASA and PBS, there is a deep well of free nature and science documentaries. Your library's free apps — Kanopy and Hoopla, which we cover in separate guides — carry many acclaimed documentaries at no cost with your library card. Free, ad-supported streaming services and the free tiers of the big video sites carry more.

For an evening's viewing, this is a gentle, reliable pleasure: a documentary about the deep sea, the planets, or the natural history of a continent, free and in no hurry. Because so much is scattered across different apps, the trick is simply to search the subject you are curious about and see which free app has it.

When the choice feels overwhelming, start with the library apps — they are curated, ad-free, and paid for already by your card.

CITIZEN SCIENCE

8. Joining in: gentle citizen science

Help real science from your own backyard.

If watching makes you want to take part, there are gentle ways to join real science from home, free. Projects invite ordinary people to count the birds at their feeders, note when the first flowers bloom, or help sort photographs from wildlife cameras and telescopes. Your small observations add up to genuine research.

The Cornell Lab runs bird counts anyone can join; other projects, often gathered under the name 'citizen science,' let you help with everything from classifying galaxies to tracking butterflies. It asks nothing but a little time and your own noticing, and it gives a satisfying sense of contributing to something larger.

For a curious retiree, it is a lovely way to turn a hobby into a small purpose — and a wonderful thing to do alongside a grandchild who is learning to pay attention to the world.

STARGAZING

9. Stargazing apps: naming the night sky

Hold up your phone and learn the stars.

On a clear night, a free or inexpensive stargazing app turns a phone or tablet into a guide to the heavens. Hold the device up toward the sky, and it shows you the names of the stars, planets, and constellations you are pointing at, moving as you move. It is a gentle, wondrous way to finally learn the night sky you have looked at all your life.

Several such apps exist, some free and some a small one-time cost; search your app store for 'star map' or 'stargazing' and read the notes before installing. Paired with a lawn chair on a summer evening, it is about the most peaceful hobby there is.

It is also a grand thing to share. A child holding the phone to the sky, calling out the planets, is science and wonder rolled into one free evening.

ON THE TV

10. Getting it onto the big television

Science and nature look grand on a large screen.

A rocket launch or a nature documentary is all the more stirring on the big screen, so it is worth getting these onto the television when you can. The NASA and PBS apps are available on most smart TVs and streaming boxes — look in the device's app store. For the live feeds and documentaries, you can also often open a web browser on the TV, or cast the picture from a tablet.

On a Roku, Fire TV, Apple TV, or Google TV, search the app store for 'NASA' or 'PBS' and install the free app. Then it plays like any other channel. For a family gathering, a nature program filling the big screen beats almost anything else on offer.

If the TV proves fiddly, a tablet on a stand is a fine alternative, and easier to steer. Do not let the television stop you enjoying any of this.

GETTING STARTED

11. Getting started, step by step

Install one free app, and you are away.

Pick the one that excites you most and start there. On a phone or tablet, open your app store, search for 'NASA,' 'PBS,' or 'Merlin Bird ID,' and install the free app. Open it and begin — none of them needs payment to enjoy the free parts, though PBS and some others offer an optional members' tier.

On a computer, type the web address into your browser instead: nasa.gov for space, pbs.org for programs. Everything is free to begin, and there is no wrong way to explore. If something asks you to create a free account to save favorites or sign in to your PBS station, that is normal and still free.

Take one at a time. Install the NASA app today, add Merlin next time you are in the yard, and build your little collection of wonders as you go.

TIP

Install just one app to begin — whichever subject you love most. You can always add the others later; starting small is what makes a new habit stick.

SPACE IMAGES

12. The great space telescopes

Pictures of the universe that take the breath away.

Among the free wonders NASA shares are the images from its great space telescopes — vast clouds where stars are born, distant galaxies, planets in extraordinary detail. These are released free for anyone to view and marvel at, through the NASA app and website and the telescopes' own pages. No subscription, no catch; the agency wants the whole world to see.

You do not need to understand the astronomy to be moved by the pictures. Many people simply enjoy them as beauty — the colors, the scale, the strangeness. They make wonderful screen backgrounds, too, and a fine thing to show a grandchild who is curious about what is out there beyond the sky.

New images arrive regularly as the telescopes keep working, so there is always something fresh to see. A few minutes browsing them is a gentle, awe-filled pause in an ordinary day.

OCEANS

13. The oceans and the creatures of the deep

The underwater world, streamed free.

The sea is as wondrous as space, and much of it is online free. Aquariums and ocean institutes stream live cameras of their tanks — jellyfish drifting, otters playing, sharks gliding — that are as soothing as they are fascinating. Research vessels sometimes stream live from deep-sea dives, so you can watch the ocean floor explored in real time.

Nature documentaries about the oceans, many free through your library's Kanopy and Hoopla, round out the picture with the great filmed journeys beneath the waves. For anyone who finds water calming, a live jellyfish or otter camera is among the most peaceful things a screen can offer.

GOOD TO KNOW

Aquarium live cams — jellyfish, otters, penguins — are wonderfully calming and completely free. Search an aquarium's name along with 'live cam' to find them.

GARDENS & PLANTS

14. Gardens, plants, and the growing world

For the gardener and the plant-lover.

If your pleasures run to the garden, the growing world is well served online. Free apps identify plants, trees, and wildflowers from a photo, so a walk becomes a naming game. Botanical gardens offer virtual tours of their grounds and glasshouses, and gardening programs and channels overflow with free, practical advice for any climate or question.

Public television and the library apps carry gardening series, and there is a deep well of free how-to videos for every task from pruning to planting. For a Northeast Ohio gardener, a free plant identifier and a few trusted gardening sources are a season's worth of help at no cost.

It is a lovely blend of the screen and the soil: learn a plant's name indoors, then go out and tend it. Curiosity and the garden feed one another.

THE BODY

15. The human body and health science

Understanding ourselves, from reliable sources.

Science about our own bodies and health is plentiful online, and the trick is sticking to trustworthy sources. Public television's science programs, the great medical centers, and government health sites explain how the body works, what conditions mean, and what the latest reliable thinking is — all free, and written for ordinary people rather than doctors.

This is wonderful for satisfying curiosity about how we are put together, and useful when you want to understand a diagnosis or a procedure in plain terms. The key is to lean on established institutions rather than random videos, so that what you learn is sound. When health questions are personal, these explain the general picture; your own doctor remains the one to answer about you.

WATCH OUT

For anything about your own health, use well-known medical and government sources to understand the general picture, and take personal questions to your own doctor. Be wary of dramatic 'cures' from unknown sources.

NATURE NOTEBOOK

16. Keeping a nature notebook

Turn watching into a gentle, lasting hobby.

Many people find that watching nature online leads naturally to paying more attention to the nature around them. A simple nature notebook — a list of the birds that visit the feeder, the first flowers each spring, the creatures you identify with an app — turns passing wonder into a lasting, satisfying hobby. The apps do the identifying; you do the noticing and the noting.

You can keep it on paper or in a simple note on a tablet, whichever you prefer. Over a year it becomes a quiet record of the living world at your own door, and a pleasant thing to look back on. It is the same gentle pleasure as a reading diary, turned toward the garden and the sky.

GOOD TO KNOW

Jot down the birds, plants, and creatures you identify. A season's nature notebook, kept lightly, becomes a treasured record of the life around your home.

FOR CHILDREN

17. Science and nature with the grandchildren

The best screen time there is.

All of this shines brightest shared with a child. Instead of the usual cartoons heavy with advertising, you can watch a rocket launch together, name the birds in the yard, explore the ocean floor, or marvel at a galaxy. It is screen time that teaches, that you can enjoy side by side, and that costs nothing at all.

Keep it led by the child's own wonder. If they love dinosaurs, chase dinosaurs; if it is space, watch a launch and browse the telescope pictures. The apps and sites here are wholesome and largely free of advertising, so you can relax and simply explore together.

Years from now, a grandchild may well remember the evening you watched the Earth turn from orbit, or the morning the bird app named a cardinal at the feeder. Wonder, freely shared, is a fine inheritance.

WEATHER & EARTH

18. The weather and our planet, live

Watch the Earth's weather and wonders unfold.

Our own planet is as fascinating as the stars, and much of it is free to watch. The national weather service and its parent agency put live radar, satellite views, and forecasts online at no cost, far richer than the quick report on the evening news. You can watch a storm system turn across the country or follow the seasons from above.

For the curious, there are live views of volcanoes, rivers, northern lights, and more, streamed free by universities and agencies. Pairing these with the NASA view of Earth from orbit gives a grand sense of the living planet — its weather, its oceans, its restless beauty — all from a comfortable chair.

It is practical, too. Learning to read the free radar and satellite maps is a genuinely useful skill for anyone who keeps an eye on Ohio weather, and it costs nothing to pick up.

PHONE SCIENCE

19. Science you can do with a phone

Your phone as a pocket naturalist.

Beyond watching, your phone can become a small instrument of discovery. We met the Merlin bird app; there are free apps that identify plants, trees, and wildflowers from a photo, and others that name insects or mushrooms, turning a walk in the yard into a gentle lesson. Point, photograph, and learn what you are looking at.

Stargazing apps, which we will come to, name the night sky overhead. Weather apps show the radar in your palm. None of this requires any expertise — the phone does the identifying, and you do the noticing. For a curious mind, it adds a quiet layer of wonder to an ordinary day.

Read the app store notes before installing any of these, and lean toward the free, well-reviewed ones from known makers. A free plant identifier and the Merlin bird app together make the backyard a classroom.

GOOD TO KNOW

A free plant-identifier app turns a garden walk into a discovery. Photograph a flower or tree you cannot name, and the app tells you what it is — a small delight, and useful too.

AN AFTERNOON

20. Making a habit of wonder

A little curiosity, folded into each day.

The folks who get the most from all this are not the ones who try to learn everything at once. They fold a small wonder into the day: the bird app on the morning walk, a NASA image with their coffee, a nature program after supper. One habit, gently kept, does more than a burst of enthusiasm that fizzles.

Pick the one thing that delights you most — the birds, the stars, the oceans — and let it become a small daily pleasure before you add another. There is no test and no finish line; the point is the curiosity itself, kept alive and well-fed. It is one of the surest ways to keep a mind bright and content.

GOOD TO KNOW

Keep one small wonder in your day — a bird named, an image seen, a question followed. A curious mind is a contented one, and it costs nothing to feed.

ZOO & SAFARI

21. Zoo and safari cameras, live

Animals going about their day, free to watch.

Many zoos and wildlife parks stream live cameras of their animals, free for anyone to watch — pandas munching bamboo, penguins waddling, big cats dozing, elephants at the water. African game reserves sometimes stream live safari drives, so you can watch real wildlife on the plains from your sitting room. It is endlessly watchable and wonderfully calming.

These are a particular joy with grandchildren, who will happily watch the animals for ages, and a gentle companion for a quiet afternoon on your own. Search a zoo's name along with 'live cam,' or look for 'live safari,' and choose a camera from the zoo's or reserve's own site.

Because of time zones, the animals may be asleep when you look; try another camera, or come back later, and you will catch them active. It is the next best thing to being at the zoo,

and it never closes.

FOLLOW A MISSION

22. Following a space mission

Share in the adventure as it unfolds.

For a little ongoing excitement, you can follow a space mission as it happens. NASA and other agencies share free updates, live coverage of launches and landings, and news of what their spacecraft are doing, through their apps and websites. Following a mission to the Moon, Mars, or beyond gives a pleasant sense of being part of the adventure.

Launch days especially are a treat: the countdown, the roar, the climb into the sky, all streamed live and free. Mark the ones that interest you and gather the family round the screen. It is the kind of shared wonder that used to bring neighborhoods together, now available to anyone with a tablet.

Between launches, the steady stream of images and updates keeps the curiosity fed. There is always a mission underway somewhere out there.

IF STUCK

23. If a feed will not load

A dark screen is usually just patience required.

A gentle reassurance about the live feeds: if one looks dark or blank, it is very often simply night where the camera is pointing, or a launch that has not yet begun. The nest is quiet, the sky is dark, the animals are asleep. Patience, or a different camera, is usually all that is needed — nothing is broken.

If a video genuinely will not play, close the app or the browser tab and open it fresh, which clears most hiccups. Make sure your internet is working by trying another page. These are the same simple steps that fix most anything on a screen, and they rarely fail.

So do not give up on a blank feed too quickly. Check back when it is daytime at the camera, and the wonders are usually right there waiting.

TWO WAYS IN

24. Two ways people come to this — and both are fine

Quiet curiosity for yourself, or wonder to share with the grandchildren.

People come to free science and nature for two lovely reasons, and both are worth having. Knowing yours helps you choose where to begin.

If it is for your own curiosity

You simply love to learn and to watch the natural world.

- Leave the NASA live view of Earth running as a calm companion.
- Follow a PBS nature or science program of an evening, free and unhurried.
- Watch the Cornell bird cams and name your backyard birds with Merlin.

If it is to share with the grandchildren

You want free, wholesome, ad-free wonder to enjoy together.

- Watch a rocket launch together with the NASA app, countdown and all.
- Identify birds in the yard with Merlin's photo and sound tools.
- Explore the night sky with a stargazing app on a summer evening.

GOOD TO KNOW

Either way, it is screen time without the usual junk — no ads aimed at children, no bill, just the real world and real wonder.

HELPING A RELATIVE

25. Setting it up for a parent

A gentle, endless supply of wonder.

For a parent who loves the outdoors, the stars, or a good documentary, this is a thoughtful setup. Install the one or two free apps they would most enjoy — often the NASA app and Merlin for the birds — on their tablet, and show them just how to open one and let it play. Keep the home screen tidy with only the apps they will use.

Pair it with a bird feeder outside the window, and Merlin becomes a daily delight. Leave the rest to grow as they get comfortable, and write down any logins on a slip of paper kept at home. A parent who can name the birds at the feeder, or watch the Earth turn from orbit, has a small new pleasure every single day.

It is also a shared thread between the generations: something to talk about on the phone, a bird spotted, a launch watched. Small wonders, freely given.

TIP

Pair a parent's Merlin app with a feeder outside their window. Naming the visitors becomes a cheerful daily ritual, and a lovely thing to report on the next phone call.

STAYING SAFE

26. Keeping it safe and free

The real apps are free; beware anything that demands payment.

The genuine services here — NASA, PBS, the Cornell Lab and its Merlin app — are free, and you reach them safely by installing the real app from your phone's official app store, or by typing the web address yourself (nasa.gov, pbs.org). Avoid clicking links in e-mails promising 'exclusive footage' or 'free documentaries' that then ask for a credit card.

Stargazing and some other apps may have free and paid versions; read the app store notes before installing so you know which you are getting, and there is no shame in choosing the free one. If any 'science' site demands payment to show you what NASA or PBS give away free, close it and go to the official address instead.

WATCH OUT

NASA, PBS, and the Cornell Lab never ask for your credit card to view their free material. If a site demands payment or odd personal details for 'space footage' or 'free nature films,' back out.

COMMON MISTAKES

27. Common mistakes

Avoid these and it all stays a pleasure.

The few snags people meet are small and simple to sidestep.

- Installing a lookalike app instead of the official one — check the maker's name (NASA, PBS, Cornell Lab) in the app store.
- Paying for a 'premium' version when the free one is plenty to enjoy.
- Expecting everything in one place; science and nature are spread across several free apps, so search by subject.

- Forgetting the library apps, Kanopy and Hoopla, which carry many free documentaries with your card.
- Giving up on a live feed that is dark — a nest cam at night or a launch not yet begun simply needs patience.

TIP

When a live feed looks blank or dark, it may just be night at the nest, or a launch that has not started. Check back later rather than assuming it is broken.

COMMON QUESTIONS

28. Common questions

The questions I hear most about free science and nature online.

Here are the ones that come up most often when I show someone this.

If yours is not here, it is likely a quick answer — ask at the library, or give me a call, and we will sort it.

QUESTIONS

29. Is all of this really free?

Mostly yes — NASA and the Cornell Lab are free; PBS is largely free.

NASA and the Cornell Lab, including the Merlin app, are free. PBS offers a generous amount free through its app, with an optional members' tier for extra viewing. Some stargazing apps have a small cost. You never need to pay to enjoy a great deal of wonderful material.

QUESTIONS

30. What is the easiest thing to start with?

The NASA app, or Merlin for the birds.

Most people take to the NASA app quickly — the live view of Earth and the launches are immediate delights. If you feed the birds, the free Merlin Bird ID app is the other easy winner, naming the birds at your feeder from a photo or their song. Start with whichever speaks to you.

QUESTIONS

31. Can the grandchildren watch safely?

Yes — these are wholesome and largely ad-free.

The genuine NASA, PBS, and Cornell Lab apps are wholesome and either ad-free or lightly advertised, with no content aimed at selling to children. A rocket launch, a nature program, or birds at the nest is exactly the kind of screen time most families are glad to share.

QUESTIONS

32. Can Merlin really name a bird from its song?

Yes — its 'sound ID' listens and lists the singers.

It can. The free Merlin Bird ID app has a 'sound ID' feature: hold up your phone outdoors while birds are singing, and it listens and lists the birds it hears, in real time. It also identifies birds from a photo you take. For backyard birders it is a small marvel, and it is free.

QUESTIONS

33. Can I watch this on my television?

Often yes, through the TV's app store or browser.

The NASA and PBS apps are available on most smart TVs and streaming boxes; look in the device's app store. You can also open a browser on many TVs, or cast from a tablet. A nature documentary or a launch on the big screen is well worth the small effort to set up.

QUICK RECAP

34. The quick recap

The whole guide in one glance.

- Great science and nature are free online — no subscription, and wonderful with grandchildren.
- NASA (free app and nasa.gov) brings live space feeds, launches, and stunning images.
- PBS offers NOVA, Nature, and more, largely free through its app.
- The Cornell Lab streams live bird cams, and the free Merlin app names birds by photo or song.
- Your library's Kanopy and Hoopla carry many free documentaries with your card.
- Install only the official apps from the app store; the real ones never demand payment to look.

GOOD TO KNOW

A bird feeder and the Merlin app, a rocket launch with a grandchild, the Earth turning on the screen — free wonder, every day of the week.

BILL'S HERE TO HELP

35. You do not have to do this alone

You just have to remember that a friendly, patient person is one call away.

I hope this guide made free science and nature feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it in a drawer with your other home papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and do not worry for a moment about memorizing anything.

When you would rather have a hand, that is exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that do not need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. I am a patient tech helper, so for getting the NASA, PBS, or bird apps onto your tablet or television I will happily sit with you until it is working.

GOOD TO KNOW

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, or visit BillsHomeTech.com. Serving Atwater and all of Portage County. 30+ years of patient, plain-English tech help — and if you are ever not 100% happy with a visit, I will make it right or refund it. That is a promise. — Bill

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

Where to Find Free Wonder

The main free homes for science and nature

	Best for	Where
NASA	Live space, images	App / nasa.gov
PBS	NOVA, Nature	Free PBS app
Cornell Lab	Bird cams, Merlin ID	App / website
Library apps	Documentaries	Kanopy, Hoopla

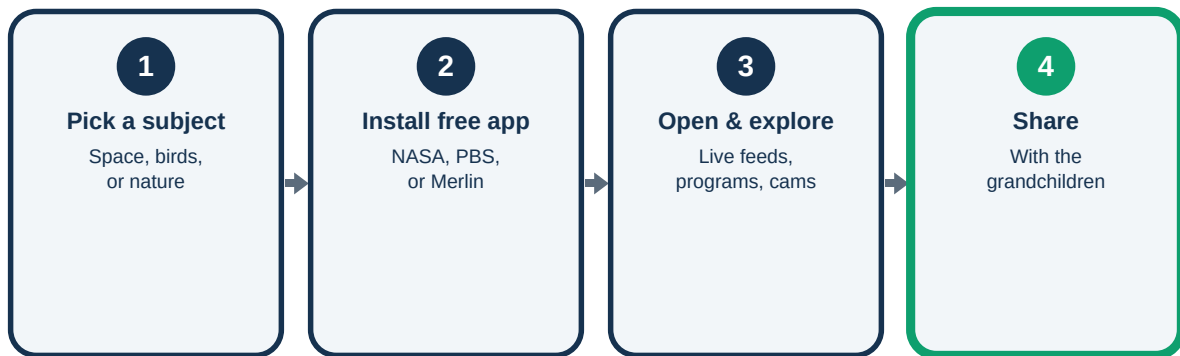
All free to enjoy -- some offer optional members' tiers you never need.

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

From App to Wonder

Four easy steps



No credit card needed for the free material -- and wonderful to share.

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.



HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

In-home visit — \$99 flat for your first visit. No contracts and no surprise charges, and a 30-day follow-up is included.

Remote Support — \$49 for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the \$49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that \$49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members (\$39/mo).

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full \$99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Call or text **(330) 200-8042** · Book a visit: **billshometech.com/book** · **bill@billshometech.com**

This free guide is for general information only — not professional advice, and no substitute for your device's own manual. Any prices or outside products mentioned can change; please confirm current details before you buy. Please use your own good judgment and follow it at your own risk — for anything involving electricity, gas, water, or heights, stop and call a licensed professional. Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results. © 2026 Bill's Home Tech, LLC.