

QUOTATION

EDWIN WAY TEALE ON SHAPING VULPINE HUNTING SKILLS

Because the red fox is legendary for its cunning and resourcefulness, it is not surprising to find that the schooling that red-fox kits receive is almost human in its program of progressive training. The parents use an elaborate and careful system for educating their offspring in the art of making a living.

As soon as the kits are weaned, the mother fox begins bringing captured mice, birds and rabbits into the den. As the young foxes grow older, the food is dropped at the entrance instead of being brought inside. A little later, it is deposited a few feet outside the entrance. Then it is placed several yards away and, finally, the kits have to search over an area of several hundred square yards to find their dinners. During the last part of the training, the parent foxes begin hiding the captured birds or rabbits beneath leaves and rubbish, thus forcing the kits to use their sense of smell as well as their eyes in making their discoveries. In this practical, progressive manner, the school for foxes educates the young animals for the vital work of hunting. (p. 189)

From: Teale, E. W. (1945). *The lost woods: Adventures of a naturalist*. New York: Dodd, Mead.

Contributed by Susan M. Schneider, Department of Psychology, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama 36849.