

Smack Dab Glossary

Animals

Bloodhound: A type of dog known for its strong sense of smell, powerful nose and its ability to track people and animals for long distances. If you're on the run, you hope that this dog isn't tracking you.

Crawdad: A freshwater crustacean found in freshwater creeks and rivers. It is known by many other names including crayfish, crawfish, and freshwater lobsters. In many ways, it looks like a small lobster.

Red-headed Woodpecker: A type of wood - pecking bird native to the Southeastern United States. It's known to store its food under crevices, bark, and tree cavities. With a bright red head, the red-headed woodpecker is truly a distinctive sight in the woods.

Scarlet Tanager: A songbird that migrates through the Southeastern United States. Birders have to be very patient to spot them. They are often found in the tallest branches of the tallest trees. Before adult male scarlet tanagers migrate in the fall, their red feathers turn green. Truly a color-changing act!

Dialect and Expressions

Bugs-on-a-bike-ride-fast: Have you ever ridden your bike so fast that bugs hit your face? Then you know that out-of-control feeling that Cricket has when everything is coming at her too quickly to process.

Hunkered: Crouched down or concentrating on something. If you've ever played hide-and-seek, you've probably hunkered down at one point or another.

"I reckon": Southern slang for "I think" or "I guess" or "makes sense to me."

Jimmy (the lid loose): to open something by jostling and/or using force.

Kin: southern slang for family or relatives—kinfolk.

"Mess of" eggs: Southern slang for a large quantity of something—such as a food. As a Southerner, Cricket loves to eat a "mess" of good food with her kinfolk (but only if they're not her cousins Little Quinn, Jackson, or Clay).

“Speck of”: A small amount. Not drawing a speck of attention means that people passed Cricket by on the road without really noticing her.

Smidgen: a word used to describe a small quantity of something. If you have “smidgen” of something, it’s so small that you could probably hide it in your pocket.

Foods

Collards: A Southern dish made from the green leafy vegetable collard greens.

Fish fry: A meal, especially one taking place outdoors, that features fried fish (and hopefully hushpuppies). Fish fries are often a reason for community gatherings in the South.

Hushpuppies: A Southern food made up of a seasoned cornmeal batter with onions, deep fried into roughly the size of golf balls. In making hushpuppies, you’re not aiming for perfection or symmetry; you’re aiming for something that simply tastes good. If you like them, you’ll want to eat a “mess” of them.

Jerky: Meat (such as beef or venison) that is cut into thin strips and then dried to make a chewy, protein-rich food.

Potluck: A meal gathering where each person brings a dish to share with everyone else.

Rutabagas: A root vegetable related to the turnip. They have their nutritional value, but neither Cricket nor the author of *Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe* is a fan of rutabagas. We challenge any reader to come up with a recipe for rutabagas that makes them taste good, and we promise to reconsider our position.

Misc.

Dowser (rod): A rod used in searching for water, metals and other buried materials. Sometimes it is shaped like a wishbone.

Johnny Cash: A country musician and songwriter famous in the 20th century. You can hear one of his songs in the Smack Dab playlist [<https://youtu.be/OSGTNm5eEzU>]

Plants

Chickweed: A low plant that grows wild in the Southeastern United States in the early spring. It’s edible and great in salads (but don’t eat it in large quantities)

Greenbrier: A climbing vine that is native to the Southeastern United States. If you’re really hungry, young shoots are edible.

Possum grapevine: A grape with small, tart grapes that grows in the wild in the Southeastern United States. If grown between trees, the vine can also make a terrific natural swing.

Privet: An invasive tree or shrub native to Asia that now is often found in the Southeastern United States. It is not uncommon to find privets around abandoned homesites in the South, as they were sometimes used as border shrubs. Sometimes, the privets and the chimneys are the only things left of old homesites.

Tea olive trees: A fragrant tree native to Asia that grows in the Southeastern United States. The blooms are tiny, but the smell spreads far and is simply heavenly.