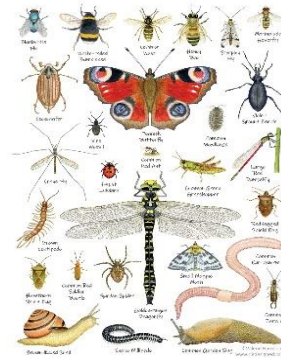


25 things to do outdoors!

1. Go on a Mini-Beast Hunt

Spring is well and truly here, and the warmer weather will bring lots of creepy crawlies out. So get your children out in the fresh air and take a closer look in your garden or on your daily walk. You'll soon notice it's teeming with wildlife! Can you find...

- a worm after a spring shower
- a bumblebee looking for nectar
- a spotty ladybird exploring the grass
- a slimy snail in a dark damp spot
- a butterfly basking in the sunshine?



Use the chart enclosed to identify the things you find. Can you group them together?
How many legs? Wings? Colour?

2. Go on a Spring /Summer Scavenger Hunt

Scavenger hunts encourage children to use and develop their observation skills. When they are hunting for treasures they pay more attention to their surroundings and notice things they may have missed otherwise. So they are a wonderful way to help youngsters increase their awareness of the environment.

Head to the woods and look out for...

- brightly coloured wild flowers
- fluffy dandelion clocks
- nibbled leaves
- a soft feather
- spotty ladybirds
- a four leaf clover



Use the chart enclosed to find natural items on your walk.

3. Tiny Treasure Hunt

You'll need to keep your eyes peeled for this activity. Hunt for really small things you can fit into a matchbox. Collect little leaves, blades of grass, small snail shells, tiny twigs, feathers and pebbles. Turn it into a competition with your family – who can fit the most items inside their box? You can take a magnifying glass on your scavenger hunt to help children to investigate their finds. Can they see intricate patterns, subtle colour changes and interesting textures?



4. Make Natural Art

Put pencils and crayons to one side and look for natural art materials instead. Collect fallen leaves, petals and sticks and use them to make a picture or sculpture. Please make sure you don't pick wildflowers, however, as they are important for wildlife and some are protected by law.



Find out about Richard Shilling who is a land artist based in Northern England who encourages children to get outside to see and create art in nature. <https://www.richardshilling.co.uk/>



Andy Goldsworthy is also an artist who uses natural materials. What ideas do you have for making a nature sculpture or picture? Send us a photograph or your idea, we would love to see them. These ideas from Andy Goldsworthy are good, using **Dandelions!**



5. Move like Mini-beasts

This is a great way to get active and burn off some excess energy. You can do it outdoors or inside. Challenge your children to:

- lie on the ground and wriggle like a worm
- flap their arms like a butterfly flutters its wings
- put their hands on the floor and scuttle about like a spider
- do some giant leaps like a grasshopper.
- crawl on the floor then curl up into a ball like a woodlouse.

Have fun with Cosmic Yoga, 'The Hungry Caterpillar'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhWDiQRrC1Y>

Take part in Cosmic Yoga 'Enzo the Bee'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uyj5LooYWyg>

6. Tell a Story Inspired by Woods and Trees

Start things off by giving your children the first sentence and encourage them to tell the rest of the story. Remind them of our Tales Toolkit ideas <https://talestoolkit.com/> using a character, setting, problem and a solution.

You could also jot ideas on scraps of paper, then get your children to choose some at random that they have to incorporate into their story. These could include:

- A tree has fallen in the woods
- A character has gone missing
- An animal is shouting an alarm call
- There are some mysterious footprints to follow. Gather together as a family and share the stories you have made up. They'll make great bedtime stories too when you've read all the books you have at home!

7. Lie on the Grass and Look at the Clouds

Use the frame enclosed to identify the types of clouds. The names are a bit complicated but it's just for fun. You might even notice some pictures, use your imagination!



8. The Journey Stick

You will need

A stick

String or masking tape

Scissors

Availability of small loose parts in the natural environment



- Use the stick to represent a journey.
- Add things to your stick that you find along the way as you walk, such as leaves and petals.
- At the end of your walk, see if you can recall the features of the journey by looking at your stick.

9. Blindfold Explorers

How good is your sense of place without your sense of sight?

This activity works best with one person wearing the blindfold and another guiding them. Take the hand of the “blind” person, and taking it nice and slow, guide them to an object, large or small. Maybe a tree, or a wall... Make sure to tell them if they have to step over something or duck under something. Remember they can’t see!

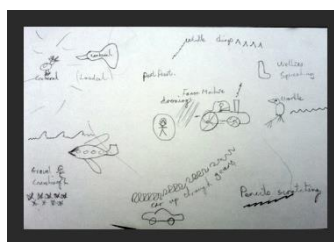
When they reach the object, guide them to put their hands on it and have a good feel – up high, down low, how does it feel?

Take them back to the start point and take the blindfold off – now they must go and find what they were touching!



10. Make a Sound Map

Sketch a map of the view from your door, balcony or garden. When you hear a sound, mark it down with a symbol or drawing of the sound.



11. Forest Bathing

Forest bathing is an activity with no resources! It's not exercise or walking or investigating, it is simply spending time in and with nature, using all of our senses.

First, find your spot. Leave phones and cameras and any other distractions at home.

Encourage children to breathe in the smells, listen to the sounds and soak up the atmosphere of the forest. Encourage close examination of a leaf, a log or a flower on the forest floor. Encourage children to feel through their feet the ground that they are walking on. How would they describe the feeling? Take a seat on a comfortable log and listen. What can you hear? Do the sounds change as you sit quietly for a time? Try not to talk while you are walking. Once you have finished, spend a short time reflecting. How do you feel now?



12. Make Flower Petal Perfume

You will need

Clear plastic jar or bottle.

Scissors

Herbs and flowers

Oranges



Tear or cut up the petals from the flowers, and leaves from the herbs. Press the oranges and squeeze out the juice. Mix them together then add some water to make a solution. Pour into your container, then add a label. What name will you give your perfume?

13. Identify Trees

On your daily walk how many different trees can you find? What are their names?

Use the sheet to identify the trees.

If you can download the tree app from the Woodland Trust Web site to help you.

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/tree-id-app/>



14. Make a Kitchen Roll Bird Feeder

This is messy fun and we have done this at school, so the children should be familiar with the activity, and it will help them learn about the birds in your neighbourhood.

You can make this simple feeder with items you probably already have at home:

Smother a cardboard tube in peanut butter (no added salt and sugar versions are suitable for birds).

1. Roll it in bird seed and thread some string through the hole.
2. Tie it up in your garden where birds will feel safe eating.
3. <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2019/03/10-garden-birds/> to help you and your children identify them.



15. Make Your Own Bird Hide in the Garden or go Birdwatching on your Daily Walk

Which birds did we see when we took part in the RSPB Big Birdwatch at School?

Bird stalking: Using face paints to create camouflaged faces, you can creep or crawl along the ground to an agreed distance from a bird feeding station. You can watch birds up close with just your eyes and learn the skills of being calm and patient when watching wildlife.



Identification check list: Look at beak shapes and colour, recognise similarities and differences in body shape, feather colours and patterns, and how birds move. For example, robins and blackbirds hop and perch, whilst blue tits are amazing acrobats and hang upside down from feeders.

Behaviour detectives: Each bird species have different behaviours and personalities. It's fun to look and listen for different behaviours – which birds are the bossiest and who is more cautious? Watch birds sunbathing, taking a bath and preening, or trying to pull a worm out the ground. Observations could inspire a story, a poem or drawings for a bird book.

Open your own bird café: Regular feeding throughout the year, especially in winter, will attract a wider variety of bird species to watch and study. Remember some birds such as dunnocks and thrushes will only feed from the ground. Design and make your own bird food recipes and make a fun survey recording which recipes attracts which species. Then create your own menu board. Don't forget to provide fresh water in a shallow bowl.

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/identify-a-bird/>



16. Make a Bee Hotel

Bee numbers are falling, so by giving them a home you'll be encouraging nature into your garden and helping bee populations.

What you'll need

A terracotta plant pot (9 – 15cm in size)

Modelling clay

Plastic straws or bamboo canes

String



What to do

1. Cut the straws or bamboo canes to a length that fits the depth of your pot. If you are using bamboo canes, you will need a grown up to carry out this part as it's tricky.
2. Tie the bundle of straws or canes together with a piece of string.
3. Place some modelling clay in the bottom of the pot and stick the bundle of straws or canes in to the clay.
4. Place the pot horizontally in your garden in a quiet place for the bees to move in.

<https://www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk/>

17. Make a Scarecrow

It's a good time to make a scarecrow for your garden to keep watch over your crops and stop the birds eating any seeds you have planted out. Scarecrows are great places for bugs to hide out and soon become part of the family - best of all you can dress them in your old clothes and give them a funny name.



18. Make a Stick Rattle

Find things that rattle, broken shells, or seed cases, or buttons, bottle tops or ring pulls.

Choose a forked stick and tie a thin wire or thread to the top of one of the forks. Thread some rattles along the wire then twist the wire around the other fork. Decorate with paints, crayons or wrap wool around the handle.



19. Make a Flying Machine /Kite



Tape two straight sticks together in a cross. Make the wings from a plastic bag, paper or some lightweight material. Stick them in place with a small amount of tape. Cut out tail flights from thin cardboard or a plastic milk container. Stick a small pebble on your kite/ flying machine's nose.

20. Make a Loom for Weaving.

Fasten four sticks together in a square. Tie string or wool to the frame and wind it up and around. Look for different textures and colours, collect bundles of grasses, coloured stems, feathers or moss, then weave them into the frame to make a natural picture.



21. Make a Bow and Arrow

Find a bendy stick. Shorter bows perform well and are easier to use.

An adult will need to carve a small notch about 2cm from each end. Attach string around one notch then pull the string tight so the bow forms a wide arc. Wrap the loose end of string round the other notch and secure it with a strong knot. Ensure you can feel tension in the bow as you pull the string back.



For arrows collect thin straight sticks. Fire!!!

22. Bark Rubbings

Pick a tree, hold a piece of paper against its bark and rub it with a soft pencil, pastel or piece of charcoal. Observe your rubbing, taking note of the various shapes



23. Make a Paper Plate Sun Catcher



This is an easy nature craft using a paper plate and sticky back plastic.

Collect daisies, buttercups or dandelions, then cut a circle out of a paper plate. Place the flowers into an arrangement then add a second circle of sticky backed plastic on top of the paper plate flower. Place the sun catcher in the window so that the sun can shine through it.

24 How Many Daisies?

Throw a hoop onto the grass. Estimate how many daisies you can see. Count them. Was your estimation a good one?

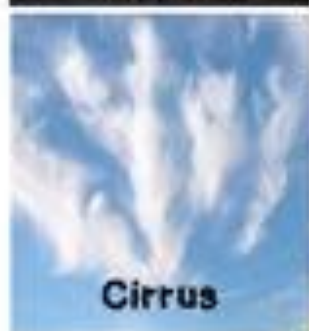


25. And just in case it does rain..... put on your wellies, and jump in as many puddles as you can!





**Cut out this
square**



British Trees

SYCAMORE TREE

Acer pseudoplatanus



OAK TREE

Quercus



HORSE CHESTNUT TREE

Aesculus Hippocastanum



SWEET CHESTNUT TREE

Castanea Sativa



WALNUT TREE

Juglans Regia



SILVER BIRCH TREE

Betula Pendula



WYCH ELM TREE

Ulmus Glabra



HORNBEAM TREE

Carpinus betulus L.



BEECH TREE

Fagus Sylvatica



ASH TREE

Fraxinus Excelsior





Birch
Betula sp.



Alder
Alnus glutinosa



Apple
Malus sp.



Aspen
Populus tremula



Goat Willow
Salix caprea



Black Poplar
Populus nigra



White Poplar
Populus alba



Beech
Fagus sylvatica



Grey Poplar
Populus x canescens



Lime
Tilia sp.



Sycamore
Acer pseudoplatanus



Blackthorn
Prunus spinosa

British Tree Leaves

DISCOVER THE WILD 



Hawthorn
Crataegus sp.



Horse Chestnut
Aesculus hippocastanum



Field Maple
Acer campestre



Crack Willow
Salix fragilis



Ash
Fraxinus excelsior



Sweet Chestnut
Castanea sativa



Hazel
Corylus avellana



Elder
Sambucus nigra



Wild Cherry
Prunus avium



Rowan
Sorbus aucuparia



Oak
Quercus sp.



Wych Elm
Ulmus glabra

