

Learn in nature

Encouraging creative, curious and critical learners



Worcestershire
Wildlife Trust

Hello and welcome

Welcome to the second edition of our refreshed school newsletter, which will give you some ideas and resources for nature-based activities you can try at your school. Each issue brings you activities linked to a different area of the curriculum, welcome slide outlines, wellbeing ideas, crafts and puzzles. We hope that you are able to take your class outside to complete some of their learning over the coming term.

Check out our **summer flowers spotter sheet** for some of the species you may be able to see in the area around your school. Find it at the end of this newsletter in full-size.



Explore lines in nature

Using dry leaves collected from outside (you could do a one-minute leaf hunt or gather and dry leaves beforehand) study their structure, identify lines and 'trace' them with your fingers. Can you identify the leaves you have chosen?

1. Children use a large leaf as a stencil, drawing around it onto paper.
2. Using the veins of the leaf as inspiration, divide the outline into sections that reflect the leaf's natural structure.
3. Within each section, model how to create a variety of lines and marks.
4. Experiment with applying different amounts of pressure to create light and dark.
5. Use dots, swirls, zigzags, curves, straight lines and dashes close together and far apart.

The children explore mark making and lines on their own leaves, with different designs in each segment. Share some of your classes results discussing the effectiveness of their designs.

For older year groups this could be extended by investigating the line style of Vincent Van Gogh using oil pastels and colour.



Lee's plant corner

Our fabulous volunteer Lee is writing a series about plants and their uses.

Bushcraft is often seen as something quite macho, all knives, fire and survival challenges. But at its heart, it's much simpler than that. As Ray Mears puts it, bushcraft is the practical knowledge of our natural world, and a huge part of that knowledge is plants. It has been suggested that 70 to 80 percent of survival knowledge is understanding plants and their uses. For our ancestors, this wouldn't have been a niche skill, it would have been everyday knowledge. The more you learn, the less you need to carry because the landscape starts to provide. Learning about plants changes how you experience the outdoors. A walk stops being just a walk, and becomes a constant process of noticing, recognising and understanding what's around you. Materials for firelighting, cordage, shelter, food and medicine are all there if you know where to look.

In this series, we'll explore some common plants and their traditional uses, starting with simple, practical applications that you can try for yourself.

Stinging nettles (*Urtica dioica*)

Stinging nettles are one of the most common plants in the UK, and many of us first learn to recognise them the hard way. Interestingly, their abundance may be linked to us. Nettles thrive in nitrogen-rich soils, and humans have been enriching soil with nitrogen for thousands of years through habitation and waste. Because of this, dense patches of nettles can sometimes indicate where people once lived. What seems like a nuisance plant is often quietly telling a story about human history.



Despite their sting, nettles are one of the most useful plants you're likely to find. The young leaves are edible when cooked, and are surprisingly nutritious, containing high levels of protein and vitamins. The fibrous stems can be processed into strong cordage, and those same fibres, when dried, make excellent tinder for firelighting. Nettles can also be steeped to create a nitrogen-rich liquid fertiliser for gardening, and they produce a yellow-green natural dye. Traditionally, they've even been used medicinally, including as a treatment for joint pain such as arthritis and rheumatism.

Look for serrated, pointed leaves arranged in opposite pairs along a ridged stem. Both leaves and stems are covered in fine stinging hairs. Young plants are usually bright green, while older stems can develop a purple tinge. Flowers hang in thin, green, drooping clusters that don't look like typical flowers.

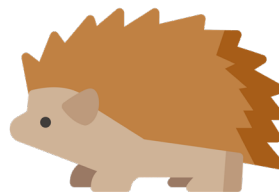
It goes without saying that if you are using nature's bounty, don't take it all. Plants like nettles are vital for many species of wildlife so always leave some for the butterflies, bees and more.

Win a hedgehog house for your school

We are excited to announce that we are holding a schools competition in partnership with Worcestershire County Council where your school can win a hedgehog house for your school site. There are three different activities to choose from and there are two age categories for each (up to 10yrs and 10yrs+) There are six hedgehog houses available.

1. Write a short poem about a hedgehog or where they live.
2. Draw or paint a hedgehog and name it.
3. Design a hedgehog-friendly garden.

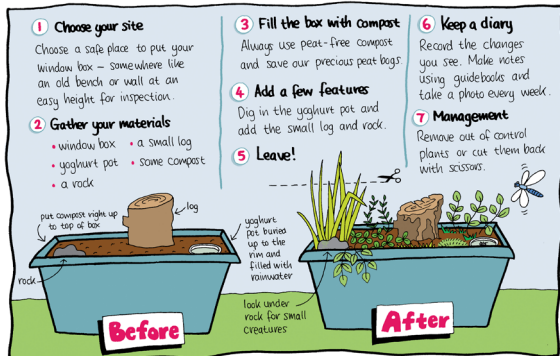
The closing date is Tuesday 30 June and entries should be emailed to learning@worcestershirowildlifetrust.org with **Hedgehog Competition** in the subject header. Please include the ages of the entries.



Craft ideas

A lovely project to start over the summer term is to make a **class mini nature reserve**. You just need a space big enough for a window box that can be placed somewhere outside and you can check on regularly. It's exciting to find out who and what will move in.

How to Make a mini nature reserve



www.wildlifewatch.org.uk

With thanks to petrick repp for original idea (windoubornwildlife.blogspot.com)

Welcome slides

We have prepared summer-inspired welcome slides for KS1, 2 and 3 that can be used in classrooms in June and July.



School trips and outreach workshops

We have reached capacity for trips to Lower Smite Farm for this academic year. Our 2026/2027 trip calendar is now open for EYFS, KS1, KS2 & KS3 (up to 60 children per day).

Please visit our website for programme details:
www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/schools



Get in touch

Email: learning@worcestershirowildlifetrust.org
Phone: 01905 754919

Summer flower spotter



Meadow buttercup



Foxglove



Poppy



Tufted vetch



Cow parsley



Teasel



Yellow iris



Toadflax



Herb robert



Red campion

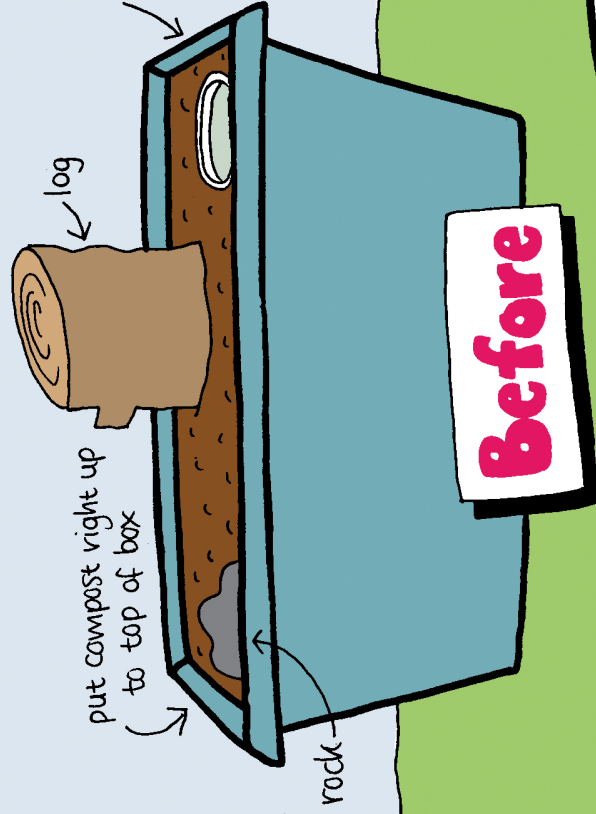
How to make a mini nature reserve

1 Choose your site

Choose a safe place to put your window box – somewhere like an old bench or wall at an easy height for inspection.

2 Gather your materials

- window box
- a small log
- yoghurt pot
- some compost
- a rock



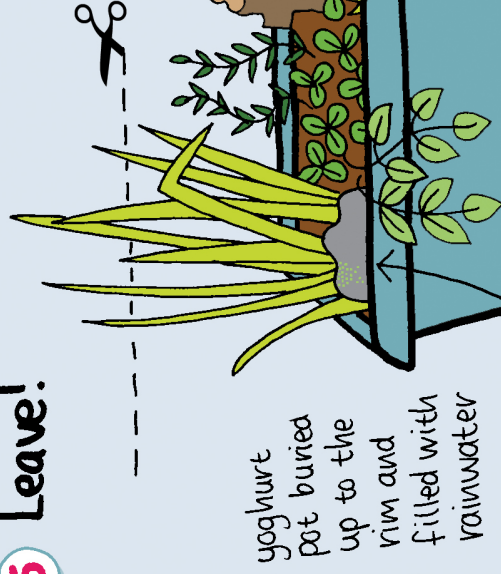
3 Fill the box with compost

Always use peat-free compost and save our precious peat bags.

4 Add a few features

Dig in the yoghurt pot and add the small log and rock.

5 Leave!



6 Keep a diary

Record the changes you see. Make notes using guidebooks and take a photo every week.

7 Management

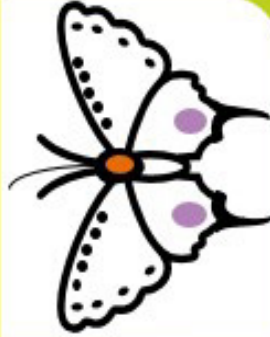
Remove out of control plants or cut them back with scissors.



June & July

KS1

Spot the difference



Ideas for June/July

At home/school

- Visit a local pond to spot ducks
- Create a song about squirrels

Help wildlife in a heatwave:

Provide water, shade and food
A shallow dish of cool water for drinking and bathing. Apple chunks for energy.



Season: Summer



Summer is a time of bright colours, warm weather and beautiful wildlife. A perfect time to go outdoors and enjoy nature local to you!

Commas



Rosemary Winnall

Did you know...



Bees and moths collect nectar from foxgloves, but they're highly poisonous to humans!

Ducklings



Andrew Parkinson

Bees



Rosemary Winnall

What you might spot...



Paul Lane

Foxgloves

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust



Protecting wildlife where you live

June & July

KS3

Wildlife Anagram

FRY TUBLET

Ideas for
June/July

At home/school

- Plant lavender for pollinators
- Design a wildlife garden on A3

Help wildlife in a heatwave:

- Provide water, shade and food.
- A shallow dish of cool water for drinking and bathing.
- Apple chunks for energy.

Season: Summer

Summer is a time of vibrancy, balmy weather and incredible wildlife. A perfect time to experience nature in your local environment!

What do **you** enjoy about summertime?

Did you know...

Robins only get their red breast three months after they've hatched.

Stinking iris smells like meat!

What you might spot...



Cinnabar moth



Wendy Carter

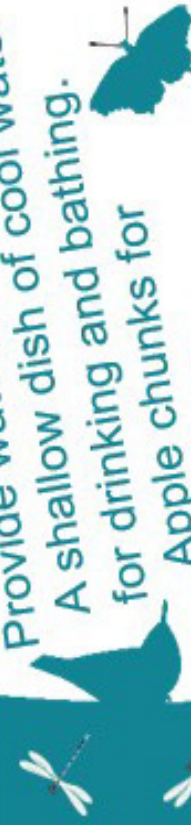
Robin fledgling



Rosemary Winnall

Stinking Iris

Paul Lane



Protecting wildlife where you live

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