

Tree-mendous Trees

Our countryside has changed hugely in the last few weeks – it has become so green and a lot of that is because the deciduous trees have come into leaf after their winter bareness. The fresh vibrant green of the delicate new leaves lasts only a short while.



As we know trees are very important in so many ways not least for the air we breathe and homes for wildlife. How many other uses of trees can you think of?

Let's spend time outside getting to know and enjoying our amazing trees with these activities:

- 1. Know your Trees** – learn to identify the trees in your local area
- 2. Hug a tree** – discover more about your favourite tree by getting up close
- 3. Make natural art** – use what you can find around trees to create a picture or sculpture masterpiece
- 4. Build a woodland shelter** -
- 5. Make healthy granola** – lots of our food comes from trees in form of fruit, seeds, nuts and of course chocolate – even honey might!



Know your Trees

Take a walk to the park or the woods and see how many trees you can name by looking at the shapes of their leaves.

Are all the trees deciduous (those that grow back their leaves in spring) or are there some evergreens too?



This Identification guide might help:

http://www.treetoolsforschools.org.uk/activities/pdfs/pdf_leaf_spotter_sheet.pdf

(The Woodland Trust also have a free Tree ID App)

Either

- 1) Use the identification guide and match the leaf to work out what each tree is when you are there
Make a drawing or take a photograph

Or

- 2) Collect a leaf from each tree (preferably one that is on the ground, blown off by the wind), bring it home and match it with a guide.

Make your own leaf guide by mounting your pictures or by pressing the leaves you have collected in the pages of a heavy book and leaving for a few days to dry before mounting and naming in a book or on card.



You can then test yourself to see how much you have learnt next time you go out or on in these quizzes:

http://www.treetoolsforschools.org.uk/activities/labelling/?act=lbl_leaf_ID&id=0&col=D2232A&light=0&lcol=891C23&title=Leaf%20ID

or

Hug a Tree

Do you have a favourite tree?
How well do you know it?
How does it look, feel, sound?
How old is it, how tall is it?



Here are some things to do to discover more about your tree.

(Hopefully you already know what kind it is from the last activity)

- Stand back at a distance and look at the shape of your tree. Stretch your arms and trace its shape.
- Lie underneath it and look up through its branches.
- Walk from the trunk to the outer branches to see how far it stretches.
- Wrap your arms around it and give it a hug.
- Shut your eyes and feel its bark. Make a bark rubbing by holding a large piece of paper on the bark and using a wax crayon on its side. Look at the pattern.
- Put your ear against its trunk – can you hear the water going up from the roots and the food going down?
- Work out how old it is – No! Please don't cut it down to count the growth rings! A better way is to measure around the trunk 1m from the ground. Divide this number of centimetres by 2.5 to give the approximate age of your tree.
- Work out how tall it is: walk away from the tree every so often bend over and look through your legs at the tree. Keep doing this until you can just see the top of the tree. The distance you have walked is the height of the tree (approximately!)

Trees are amazing, trees are wonderful!

They are very important too - give them all hugs!

Make natural art

Create your own piece of 2D or 3D Art from what you find around trees. It can be a piece of transient outdoor art and will not last or choose to stick it down on card for a slightly more permanent piece.



You will need (all optional):

- a collecting bag
- large sheet of card (side of cereal box ideal)
- PVA glue

What to do:

1. Forage around under trees and collect any natural materials you can find – twigs, bits of bark, fallen leaves, fallen tree flowers, catkins, blossom, old seed cases, seeds, cones etc. Collect them in your bag if you are taking them indoors.

Please make sure you don't pick wild flowers, however, as they are important for wildlife and some are protected by law.

2. Create your natural art masterpiece from what you have collected – a picture or a sculpture, perhaps a woodland scene or creature – an owl, a hedgehog, a snail with a spiral shell or a pattern.....

Either do this outdoors - choose a suitable spot away from where people walk but where it can be admired!

Or stick your items onto card with strong glue, pressing down and leaving to dry before you lift it.



Build a woodland shelter

Imagine living out in the woods among the trees – there are people who do and many people have over history (think Robin Hood!). You would need a shelter to keep warm and dry.

Try building a shelter in the woods if that is possible, if not you could build it in the park or in your back garden. Build it from the materials you find there. It could be a place to hide, play, have a picnic (once that's allowed) or spy on wildlife!



(If you are in a public place it will be best to dismantle your shelter before you leave, leaving the area as you found it)

Some tips to get you started!

- To carry a stick safely hold one end and drag it behind your rather than carrying in the middle.
- **Either** find a natural feature like a low branch or a dead log to lean long sticks against to create your structure
- **Or** use sturdy sticks with a fork at one end to interlock against a tree trunk or each other to create a tepee type.
- Once you have your basic structure lean or weave in smaller sticks, then cover with a thatch of leaf litter, dead branches of leaves, ferns or moss.



Healthy Granola

Try making this granola which can be eaten for breakfast or as a snack. How many of the ingredients grow on trees?

For 4 breakfast portions you will need:

- 75g rolled oats (ok, not from trees!)
- 50g mixed seeds
- 50g nuts, roughly chopped
eg brazil, hazelnut, walnut
- 50g coconut chips or desiccated coconut
- 1 apple, peeled, cored and grated
- 1 tbsp coconut or sunflower oil
- 1 ½ tbsp honey
- 50g raisins
- 50g dried apricots chopped
- 25g chopped dark chocolate



(to make **nut free** use extra seeds or dried fruit)

What to do:

1. Preheat the oven to 160c
2. Combine the oats, seeds, nuts and coconut in a large bowl.

3. Stir together the apples, oil and honey in a separate bowl then pour over the dried ingredients and toss to coat.
4. Spread it out in a large baking tray. Pat down to form an even layer.
5. Bake for 15 minutes stirring occasionally until golden and crisp.
6. Remove from the oven, stir through the dried fruit and leave to cool.
7. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 weeks.
8. Delicious served with yogurt.