

AUTUMN WILDLIFE CHALLENGE

Autumn activities for children, young people and IV befrienders

Goodbye summer, hello autumn! Autumn is here and the wildlife around us is getting ready for winter. It's a great time to get out and about and spot some of the magical and amazing changes happening in our woods and parks.

Do you meet and do fun activities together outdoors? Or perhaps you don't but would like to try? This activity is designed for children, young people and IV befrienders to do together. Pick from the ideas below or come up with something entirely different!

MATERIALS

Take a notepad, pencil and pencil crayons with you on the Challenge.

Take your photocopies of the Leaf and Mushrooms posters.

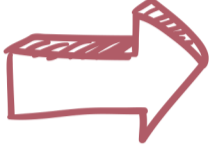
NUTS ABOUT SQUIRRELS!

'Squirrel caching' – new word? It is for us. You might have seen squirrels racing around hunting for acorns and digging holes in the earth to bury them. Squirrels eat nuts and seeds and are storing the acorns to eat in the winter months when there is less food. These places are called 'caches'.

Squirrels bury food in so many places they sometimes forget where. The acorns that remain buried grow into new Oak trees!

ACTIVITY! CAN YOU SPOT AN OAK TREE AND FIND AN ACORN FROM THE TREE?

CAN YOU SPOT A SQUIRREL? CAN YOU SPOT A SQUIRREL WITH AN ACORN? WHAT'S IT DOING?

 **FACT!** Squirrels shake the acorn to check if it's healthy enough to eat now or bury to store for winter food. They need to eat as many acorns as they can in the autumn, to gain a layer of fat to keep warm in the winter.

AUTUMN LEAVES!

When you look around you will notice trees shedding their leaves and hear them crunching under your feet on a dry day. *Walk around and notice all the different leaves on the ground.*

ACTIVITY! COLLECT SOME LEAVES AND TRY TO IDENTIFY WHICH TREES THEY COME FROM USING THE TREE LEAF POSTER.


 **FACT!** Art created using fallen leaves is a new trend in Japan called 'ochiba art' this just means 'fallen leaf art'.
Try some out yourself


FALLEN LEAF ART! YOU CAN MAKE AMAZING DESIGNS AND PATTERNS ON THE GROUND USING FALLEN LEAVES YOU HAVE COLLECTED. YOU MIGHT PICK LEAVES THAT ARE A SIMILAR SHAPE AND COLOUR OR MIX DIFFERENT COLOURS TOGETHER.

DEN BUILDING!

An all-time outdoor favourite activity for many, this can be enjoyed any time of the year. Building dens can disturb woodland animals and damage fragile plants and it's recommended to not do this in ancient woodland.

What will you need?

-  long, straight branches and sticks
- lots of thin, bendy sticks
- materials to cover your den, like dried leaves, twigs

 **FACT!** Bracken leaves may look like a good material to build your den but they can also be home to ticks. These insects can bite and cause illness so pick another material.

FASCINATING FUNGI! LOOK BUT DON'T TOUCH!

Autumn is a great time to spot all the *weird and wonderful mushrooms* that start to grow in parks and woods. Mushrooms love warm, damp autumn soil and come in many shapes and sizes. Good places to spot them are under fallen leaves, on logs, inside the hollows of standing trees, on the forest floor and grass.

Some mushrooms are poisonous to eat and even to touch. To keep yourself safe, please just look at the mushroom you've found.

ACTIVITY!

Can you identify the mushroom you spotted using the 'Autumn Fungi' poster? You might want to make a drawing of the mushroom or take a photograph; mushrooms are all sort of sizes, shapes and colours.

 **FACT!** There are more than 15,000 species in the U.K!

WANT TO KNOW MORE?!

Visit *BBC Two - Autumnwatch*

See highlights from the seasonal watchlist with challenges

BBC Two - Autumnwatch - Autumn Watchlist

Take the hedgehog quiz!