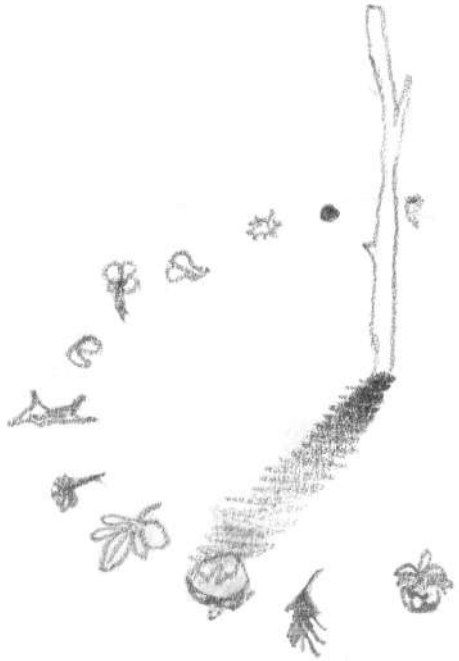
Woodland sundials and cone weather stations

On your woodland walk, pick up a thin stick and at least 12 objects such as cones and fallen hazelnuts.

When you get home visit:
www.forestry.gov.uk/westonbirt-seasonalplay to discover how to make your sundial



more family fun

www.forestry.gov.uk/westonbirt-families

www.naturedetectives.org.uk

Booklet by Lauren McIntyre and Chris MeaKin
images: Chris MeaKin, Isobel Cameron, www.moorhen.demon.co.uk
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Forestry Commission England

WOODLAND TRUST

playing through the seasons

summer

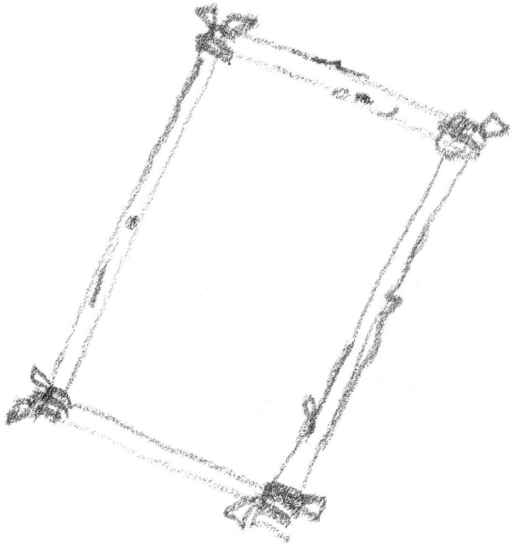
WESTONBIRT THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM

Woodland Trust nature detectives

Woodland windows

As you walk in the woodland you may find a woodland window – a place to look through at the woods beyond. A window in the leaves, between the branches, or a knot hole that lets you peer inside the tree itself. Be still for a while and look – you may discover some surprising finds.

You could build your own window that you can take with you on your walk. Look for sticks and long grasses, then bind the sticks into a window frame using the grasses.



Minibeasts on the move

Have you ever wondered where a bee buzzes to? Or where an ant trail leads?

When you spot a bee visiting a flower, wait and then follow where it goes. Make sure to watch out for obstacles though because a bee can reach some places more easily than you!

If you find a trail of ants, follow it forwards and backwards. Where have they been and where are they going?

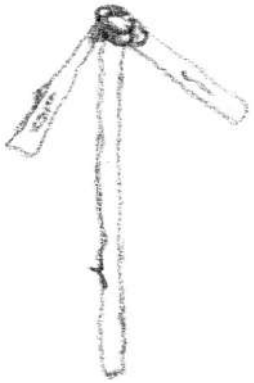
Minibeast races

If your are exploring in a group, why not split into teams and create your own minibeast races with your bodies. You could race as an insect such as a beetle running on 6 legs, or as an 8-legged spider or a millipede with many more legs!

Trails to summer treasures

Explore a small area of the woodland, looking for several secret summer places.

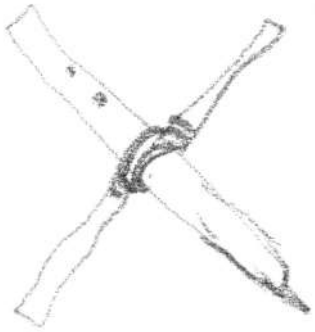
You might find a special scent, colour, sound, an animal's home, and more.



Now collect some fallen sticks and mark out a trail to these treasures using the sticks.

If you are in a group, you could split into two teams and set a trail for each other.

Maybe other visitors to the woodland will follow your trail too!



Dandelion secrets

Find an area where many dandelions are growing and pick one. Look at the stem – a white liquid or sap will be oozing out.

You can use this white sap as an invisible ink!
Just draw on a piece of paper using the stem sap. It will be very difficult to read. Leave to dry and your picture or message will then be clear to see!

Be careful when handling dandelions, as the sap can occasionally cause skin irritation in people with very sensitive skin, and may also stain clothes, so use with care!

Shadow play

Have you ever been a shadow watcher? Look at the shadows on the woodland floor, and you will see all sorts of magical pictures. You may find a shadow beast, a giant's stairway and much more!

Find a sunny glade or path. Use your hands, cones, grasses and other things to create shadow pictures on the ground.

Before you leave the sunny glade or path, why not have a game of shadow tag and try to avoid your shadow being trodden on!

Scavenger hunt

How many of these summer treasures can you find?

Whatever is growing on a tree (such as leaves, branches, flowers and seeds), the tree still needs it. Please collect only from the woodland floor.

'They love me, they love me not' daisy

Green hazelnuts and hazelnut shells

'What time is it?' dandelion clock

A leaf munched by a caterpillar

An untidily eaten cone (squirrel)

A neatly nibbled cone (mouse)

Colourful wing or tail feather

White, fluffy downy feather

A buttercup butter tester

Petals with spots or stripes

Scented petals

Blackberries

4 - leaf clover

Flower bud cases

5 different grasses

Blindfold exploring

This is a fun and interesting way to explore the summer woodland. Bring something you can use as a blindfold with you or just keep your eyes shut!

Find a sunny woodland glade with interesting places and plants to explore. Lead your friend to each spot, carefully taking them around any obstacles or holes. Ask them to touch, listen or smell, depending on what's there to explore.

See if your friend can tell when they move from the sunny spots to the shade, or from grass to soil.

Song of the wood

Find a quiet place to sit and listen. Even on a still summer day you will be able to hear the song of a summer wood. Each day it is new and different.

Can you hear:

Chirping grasshoppers
Breezes in the tree tops
Buzzing bees, buzzing wasps
Rustles in the grasses
Croaking frogs

What do you think the trees, flowers, animals and summer breeze are saying to each other?

Tree giants

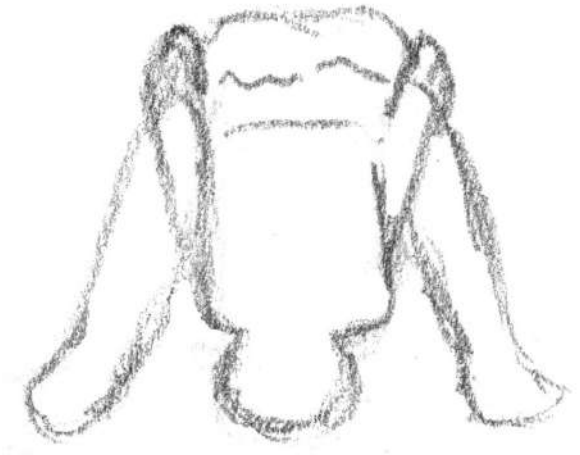
In each woodland, standing proud and strong will be a family of tree giants. Have you met the tallest of them all? Using this tree measuring activity will help you find and meet that tree giant.

Find a tree that you think is a tree giant, and face away from the tree. Look upside down between your legs and move forwards or backwards until you can see the top of the tree.

Count how many steps or paces it is to the tree trunk.

This is how tall the tree giant is.

Can you find one even taller?



What have you spotted?

☐ moths

can you see a hummingbird hawk moth?

☐ birds

fledged blue tits, great tits and woodpeckers

☐ feathers

look for feathers on the floor from summer moults

☐ ladybirds

count the spots and look for different species

☐ butterflies

find them on flowers uncurling their proboscis to drink

☐ pollinators

bees, butterflies and hoverflies visiting flowers

☐ noise

how many sounds can you hear? frogs, birds, bees...

☐ aphids

find aphids and their sticky honeydew on leaves

☐ pond

damselflies and dragonflies can be found near ponds

☐ damage

look for trees that have been damaged by deer antlers

☐ squirrels

grey squirrels feeding on green hazelnuts

☐ smell

can you smell the rotten scent of a stinkhorn mushroom?

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