

Autumn Explorer

Suitable for Years 1 and 2, September - November.

Children explore the arboretum to find as many signs of Autumn as they can. They learn how to sort leaves/nuts and use them to identify the different trees at the arboretum. They look at the lifecycle of trees and how the lifecycles of woodland animals are connected through food chains. The children use natural materials to make arts and crafts and can even plant their own tree to take home.

Key Concepts

Seasons, Autumn, habitats, parts of a plant, seed/leaf identification, lifecycles of plants and animals, hibernation.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the programme, students should be able to:

- Recognise signs of seasonal change.
- Identify plants and animals found in woodlands.
- Can describe the lifecycle of a plant and animals.
- Talk about some of the animals that live in woodlands, their lifecycles and how they have adapted to living in a woodland habitat.

Before you come

Q How do they know it is Autumn?

Programme Outline

Learning Objectives	Activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children use their senses to explore the woodland habitat. 	<p>Nature Walk Children look for signs of autumn on a walk in the arboretum collecting evidence as they go.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children learn to sort and identify plants by their leaves/seeds. 	<p>Plant identification Children identify and sort seeds and leaves.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn/reinforce the lifecycle of plants. 	<p>Plant lifecycle Children act out the lifecycle of a plant.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To learn about the animals that live in woodlands, their lifecycles and how they have become adapted to live in woodlands. 	<p>Animal signs Children discuss signs of animals seen during the walk. Whole group discussion about animals we might find in the woodland in Autumn.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To learn how some animals survive winter in a woodland. 	<p>Hide a nut</p> <p>The children pretend to be squirrels and hide a nut to be found at the end of the session.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To use the parts of plants as a craft material. 	<p>Natural Art/Craft activity</p> <p>Children make Autumn crowns using the natural materials they have found (weather dependent).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To learn how squirrels have adapted to life in a woodland. 	<p>Find a nut</p> <p>Children see if they can find their nut.</p>

Complementary Programmes

Why not have a led day by adding a second, shorter programme to complement Autumn Explorer. E.g. Woodland Art, Marvellous Minibeasts.

Self-guided trails

To complement this half-day programme, we recommend the Forestry Commission's [Seasonal Play Booklet - Autumn](#) and the [Seasonal Explorers backpack](#).

National Curriculum links

Plants

- Year 1 – identify and name a variety of common wild plants, including deciduous and evergreen trees
- Year 1 – identify and describe the basic structure of common flowering plants, including trees.
- Year 2 – observe and describe how seeds grow into mature plants.

Animals

- Year 1 – identify and name a variety of common animals.
- Year 1 – describe and compare the structure of a variety of common animals.
- Year 2 – notice that animals have offspring which grow into adults.
- Year 2 – find out about and describe the basic needs of animals for survival.

Seasonal changes

- Year 1 – observe changes across the four seasons
- Year 1 – observe and describe weather associated with the seasons and how day length varies.

Living things and their habitats (Year 2)

- Identify that most living things live in habitats to which they are suited and describe how different habitats provide for the basic needs of different kinds of animals and plants.
- Identify and name a variety of plants and animals in their habitat.
- Describe how animals obtain their food from plants and other animals, using the idea of a simple food chain, and identify and name different sources of food.