



Brighton & Hove environmental education

Run your own School Wildlife Club



© Sussex Wildlife Trust

Summer Term

Environment Club

Ongoing Activities



Woods Mill, Henfield,
West Sussex BN5 9SD
www.sussexwt.org.uk
01273 492630

Create a 'School Grounds Year Book' - documenting your activities and findings through the different seasons, using photos, databases, drawings, writing inspired by the outside etc.

Create signs, information boards and fact sheets for your grounds or wildlife area.
Laminate and display permanently outside.

Make giant sculptures of flowers and bugs, using withies, reclaimed materials or clay, and display in the area.

Get involved with the development and maintenance of school gardens and wildlife areas.

Gardening projects - vegetable patch, container gardens, hanging baskets, herb gardens etc.

Write letters to local businesses and garden centres asking for supply of seeds and resources.

Build a compost area. Organise collection of schools organic waste. Observe changes over time.

Draw maps of your grounds. Use to record species of plants and animals found on the site.

Survey your grounds.

Choose a few trees, bushes and hedges. Keep a detailed record of them throughout the year.
How wide or tall are they?

How do the colours change throughout the seasons?

What animals are living in them / eating from them?

Dates of appearance and disappearance of seeds etc.

Dates of appearance and fall of leaves.

Set up a bird feeding station and monitor visitors to the site.

Which birds come?

How many of each type?

How long do they stay for?

What is their favourite type of food?

Record your findings on the Nature Detectives Website - www.naturedetectives.org.uk.

Compare your findings with national results.

This site is a fantastic resource and well worth checking out for lots of additional and seasonal ideas.



Environment Club

Summer Term

Trees

Warm up - Tree Treasure Hunt

Create a treasure hunt with clues appropriate to the trees in your grounds
eg find a tree with..... prickly leaves, a hole in the trunk, white blossom etc.
Alternatively you could use digital photos of the trees or photocopies of the leaves.
Children collect one leaf from each of these trees.
When finished, use leaves to identify the species of trees in your grounds.

Main Activity - Leaf Identification Race

Collect about 7 -10 specimens of leaves.
Form two teams and line them up facing each other, about 10 metres apart.
Give each player a number, so on each team there is a one, two, three etc.
Put the leaf specimens in a row between the two teams.
When ready, call out the name of a tree represented by one of the leaves, then call out a number (out of sequence)

eg "the next leaf is a beech, and the number is.....six!"

As soon as the 'sixes' hear their number, they race to the specimens, trying to find the beech leaf.

The first successful player earns two points.
Choosing the wrong specimen loses two points.

Children may then want to create a map of their grounds, writing on the position of the trees they should now be able to identify. Alternatively, they may want to make name labels, which can be laminated and attached to the tree, perhaps with a little information about each species on.

Closing Game - Meet a tree

A blindfold activity, concentrating on the sense of touch.
In pairs, one child is blindfolded, the other carefully disorientates them, leads them to a tree, and encourages them to 'get to know' this tree, feeling its trunk, bark, branches, roots etc.
They are then led away from the tree, the blindfold is removed and they have to try to identify their chosen tree by sight.



Environment Club

Summer Term

Gardening - plants

Warm up - Insect Colour Choice

Best done on a warm summers day.

Discuss the role of insects in pollination.

Make model flowers by cutting petal shapes out of card and sticking them around jam jar lid (cupped side up). Place a small amount of jam in the lid and place 'flowers' in an area where insects will find them (eg sunny meadow or flower beds).

Observe lids throughout the session and see which ones the insects make for. Have they got a favourite colour? Do different insects prefer different colours? Display the results in a large flower - for every visit an insect made to a particular coloured flower, cut a petal in that colour. Stick the petals round a circle to make a flower.

Main Activity - Planting

Use egg boxes, toilet roll tubes or plant pots to plant up a selection of flowers and / or vegetables for the school garden. Easy to grow species include nasturtium, lettuce, pumpkin, beans, herbs.

Tips:

A seed should be covered by its own depth of compost.

Plant plenty of seeds as some will inevitably die.

After planting, ensure seeds get a regular watering and are in a sunny, sheltered position.

When planting out, ensure minimal damage to the fragile root system.

Don't forget to label your plants!

Closing Game - Pollination Game

Brief discussion on the role of insects in pollination and mechanisms they use for doing so (eg bees collect pollen in 'bags' on their legs, butterflies use long curled tongue to collect pollen).

Set up jam jars with coloured water (paint / food colouring) and hide around grounds.

Children are bees / butterflies - in teams they take it in turns to race to the jars, collect some nectar (coloured water) with a pipette, and run back to their base and transfer it into a measuring cylinder.

After set time period, stop race and measure which team has collected the most nectar.



Environment Club

Summer Term

Meadow / Grassland

Warm up - Habitat Loss Game

To raise awareness of habitat loss and importance of meadows / grasslands.

Mark 4 areas to represent different habitats (eg meadow, woodland, pond, flowers) using circles made of rope or sheets of newspaper.

Discuss which animals might live in each habitat, and assign one of these to each child.

Play music - when it stops they go to the habitat their animal likes.

Each turn, make habitats smaller, talking about factors which make habitats shrink (eg use of herbicides, deforestation, building houses / carparks etc), or lose one habitat completely.

Discuss the consequence for animals eg can pond animals survive in a meadow?

Main Activity - What Plants / Animals Can We Find in a Meadow / Long Grass

Give the children an empty match box / small pot. How many different things can they find in the long grass to fit in their box? Give them a few minutes to collect fragments of living plants. Try to identify.

Use sweep nets (or pond dipping nets) to survey the invertebrate population in the long grass. You will need some white trays, a white sheet or white paper to tip the bugs out onto.

Use SWT or Field Studies meadow bug identification sheet to help identify.

Generally it will only be possible to identify spiders, beetles, flies, crickets (long antennae) & grasshoppers (short antennae) and other bugs eg caterpillars.

Compare with population found in other habitats eg short grass, under bushes.

Closing Game - Oh deer!

An illustration of population dynamics and how they are affected by the availability of resources.

Participants split into two equal groups (deer and resources) and stand in 2 rows about 3m apart, back to back

Explain that deer need three things to survive – food, water and shelter (for the purposes of this game, we ignore mates)

Show players the three actions to indicate these resources – shelter (hands above head like a roof), food (rub tummy), water (cup hands in front of face).

On the count of three, turn round whilst making one of the three actions. Each deer then runs to grab a 'resource' making the same action as themselves before all the resources are used up!

If a deer and resource match up, both players return to the "deer" side – the population grows.

If a deer does not match with a resource, it dies and takes its place on the "resource" side – resource pool increases.

This can be repeated many times and shows how population size fluctuates with the availability or scarcity of resources. A population can only survive and grow if there are sufficient resources of the correct type available.



Environment Club

Summer Term

Pond

Warm up - Pond parachute games

Introduce the parachute to represent the surface of a pond. When underneath the parachute, the children are creatures living below the surface of the water, when on the parachute they are creatures living above the water. Most of the well known parachute games can be adapted to fit this context.

~Elicit 4 different pond creatures, assigning one to each child as you go around the circle.

~Create a ripple on the surface of the pond, allowing the ripples to get bigger and bigger as the wind gets stronger. Allow children (pond creatures) to experience what it feels like under the wavy water, either sitting, lying or standing.

~On command 'Pond' group raise parachute above their heads. Call out name of one pond creature eg newt. All newts run under and change places. Continue with other creatures. Introduce predator, eg great diving beetle or fish. When creature called out, they run to the other side of the parachute for safety, trying to avoid being eaten by the predator.

~3 or 4 pond creatures 'swim' around under the water. Another child is a heron. They remove shoes and get onto of the parachute. They have to catch their dinner by tagging the children underneath the parachute.

~Create a tent by sitting on the edges underneath the parachute. Use as a space to discuss pond ecology, pond maintenance or what it might be like to be a pond creature.

For more ideas see book 'Don't forget the parachute' by Dinah Pryor, available from SWT for £5.

Main Activity - Pond Dipping

Find out and record what's in your pond. You could try to set up a database so you can compare the catch for different months or for the same month over different years.

If time, you could create adult dragonflies out of pipe cleaners, with beads threaded on for the body, and a small piece of netting for the wings. You might want to make a food chain mobile for the pond.

Closing Game - Find the Pair

Cut up some of the pond identification sheets to create cards of the infant and adult form of pond creatures eg damselfly nymph - damselfly.

Use the cards to play snap, pairs or pelmanism so children learn to associate the two forms of the creatures.



Environment Club

Summer Term

Birds

Warm up - Survival Game

To recognise the factors that animals need to survive

Discuss survival needs of animals (food, water, shelter, mate). Make a set of cards, 20 of each need, giving a total of about 80 cards.

Choose 1 child to be a predator, eg sparrow-hawk. Other children imagine they are a bird. To stay alive they must collect at least one of each card type. Scatter cards around playing area.

On 'go' the 'birds' fly around, collecting as many cards as they can. After a few seconds, the predator starts to chase them. When s/he touches them, they must drop their cards and stand out for a count of 10. After a few minutes, stop the game. Children check their cards to see if they made it through the winter. Did they have at least one of each survival card?

Did the predator catch enough prey to survive?

Variations:

Limiting factors - Introduce some adverse conditions, eg lack of food / water, by removing some cards - was it harder to survive?

Flying in a flock - Ask 'survivors' to choose a mate from children who didn't survive - they must look after each other in a flock and hold hands at all times. If they let go, both children must drop their cards.

Population growth - Surviving pairs can choose 'babies' - all hold hands. Discover that survival is harder when bringing up a family - although there are more birds, there are still only 2 hands to collect cards.

Main Activity - Making Nests & Eggs

Using either shredded paper or straw, children weave and twist materials to make a nest, and lay on a paper plate. Line it with natural materials found outside eg moss, feathers, grass etc. Use clay to make models of a specific bird and the eggs they lay, paying attention to colour, shape, size and number. Use books or the internet to research this.

Alternatively, children use chopsticks to simulate a beak, creating outdoor nests in trees / hedges with twigs, moss etc.

Closing Game - Bird Identification Race

Collect pictures of different species of birds. Lay upright on floor, ensuring there is a corresponding name label. In teams, or as a group, children match the picture of the bird and its name.



Environment Club

Summer Term

Minibeasts

Warm up - Parachute Games

Use the parachute to represent a woodland. How many woodland creatures can they name? What might the different colours on the parachute represent?

~Elicit 4 different woodland creatures, relying on a wood for shelter and food. Ensure they are linked by a food chain eg worm - centipede - bird - fox. Assign one to each child as you go around the circle. Parachute represents shelter. Discuss what they know about each creature - how they move, what they eat etc.

~Send each minibeast out in turn. Children act out the movement of that species and cross through to the other side of the woodland (parachute) to safety. After each group has had a turn, send in 2 groups together (one predator, one prey) - one will eat the other.

~Create a tent by sitting on the edges underneath the parachute. Use as a space to discuss woodland ecology, and what they know about different minibeasts.

For more ideas see book 'Don't forget the parachute' by Dinah Pryor, available from SWT for £5.

Main Activity - Minibeast Hunting

Using pots, plastic spoons and magnifiers.

Look closely at the creatures - who lives where and how many of each kind can you find in different places in the grounds.

Can you identify them?

Use the SWT minibeast id sheet to help

What sort of places do they like best? Why?

Closing Game - Clay Modelling

Look carefully at the minibeasts collected above, observing number of legs, body segments, antennae etc.

Make clay models of the minibeasts and decorate using natural materials eg stones, twigs, leaves, encouraging accuracy and careful observation.

These could be varnished and left in an appropriate place in the wildlife area.



Environment Club

Summer Term

Mammals

Warm up - True / False Game

Make up some true or false facts about mammals (see below for examples).
Divide into 2 teams. Label one tree / side of playground 'TRUE' and the other 'FALSE'.
Teacher reads out fact - team decides whether to run to true or false marker.

<i>A bat can eat 3000 insects a night</i>	<i>True</i>
<i>Badgers can eat up to 200 worms a night</i>	<i>True</i>
<i>A foxes favourite snack is beetles</i>	<i>True (+ worms)</i>
<i>Bats have very good eye sight</i>	<i>False (uses echos to locate)</i>
<i>A drey is a squirrels home</i>	<i>True</i>
<i>Camouflage is when animals go to sleep all winter</i>	<i>False</i>
<i>Rabbits live in trees</i>	<i>False (underground burrows)</i>
<i>Hedgehogs eat over 100 insects a night</i>	<i>True</i>
<i>A nocturnal animal looks for food in the day</i>	<i>False</i>
<i>The babies of a fox are called cubs</i>	<i>True</i>
<i>A badger lives in a tree</i>	<i>False (in a sett)</i>
<i>The babies of a deer are called deerlets</i>	<i>False (fawns)</i>
<i>A mole has front legs like spades</i>	<i>True (good for digging)</i>
<i>An otter has webbed feet</i>	<i>True (good for swimming)</i>

Main Activity - Badger Trail

Discuss what they know about badgers - timid, nocturnal, poor eye sight, and how their adaptations eg good sense of smell, whiskers, help them move around and hunt.

Set up a blindfold trail in the grounds using a washing line tied around trees or posts. Children walk around trail, blindfolded, experiencing how it might feel to be a badger. How did it feel?

Closing Game - Predator / Prey Game

To look at food chains and the way they work in nature

Form a circle about 5 metres across. Blindfold two children who stand in the centre of the circle. Ask one to name a predator who lives in the area, and the other to name it's prey. Predator tries to catch his prey by listening for him. If they go near edge of circle, other children gently push them towards the middle. Stress them importance of playing the game in silence. Children might want to move in the style of the animal they've chosen to be.

How did they work out where the predator / prey was?

What strategies do animals use to hunt / protect themselves?

Variation - vary the number of predator and prey or put bells on some of the animals, forcing them to modify their hunting or hiding strategy.



Environment Club

Summer Term

Flowers

Warm up - Identification Race

How many flowers can they name?

Can they create a flower alphabet, thinking of flowers that begin with a, b, c etc.

Pick about 6 examples of flowers found in the school grounds.

Make an identification sheet by photocopying and writing the name of the specimen next to the silhouette.

Children go out into grounds and look for an example of each flower. If there are plenty of each flower, they could pick an example of each. Otherwise they could colour in the silhouette in the appropriate colour.

Main Activity - Close Observation

Play the 'camera game' with a partner. Take your partner blindfolded to a particularly beautiful flower. Get them to kneel down in front of it. When you give the command 'snap' they open their eyes, as if taking a picture, and look closely at the flower. You might then ask them to 'zoom in' or 'zoom out', to look at the flower in close up.

They are taken away from the flower and 'print off' the photo by drawing the flower as carefully as they can from memory. Afterwards they might want to draw the flower again whilst looking at it.

These 'photos' can be given to other members of the group who then have to locate the spot where the photo was taken.

Closing Game - Dandelion secrets

Look for places where dandelions are growing.

Pick one - you will see a white liquid oozing out.

You can use this sap as an invisible ink - write on a piece of paper using the stem sap. It will be difficult to read.

Leave to dry - your message should become clear to see.

NB Dandelion sap can occasionally cause skin irritation in people with very sensitive skin, and may also stain clothes.



Environment Club

Summer Term

Sustainability (or wet weather)

Warm up - Penguins on Ice Cap

This game is similar to musical chairs and raises awareness of factors affecting animal survival / endangered species

Each child has a piece of card / newspaper / mat to stand on for an island. While penguins swim around, remove one island (global warming and rising sea levels). When the music stops they have to find an island. Alternatively, when music stops they have to fold / tear off a bit of their island to make it smaller.

Discuss what they know about global warming and how we are contributing to it, and what we can do to help combat it.

Main Activity - Discussion: 'How Green is our School'

Discuss where is energy wasted in the school - lights?
water?
open windows?
computers left on?

Think about how they travel to school.
Do a survey of how they travel to school.
Can they make a campaign to encourage more children to walk?

Look at food use within the school.
Is lots of food thrown away at the end of the day?
Can you weigh the waste?
How could this be reduced?

What happens to all the used paper at school?
Is it shredded?
Could it be composted?

How is energy made?
Could the school have a wind turbine?
solar panels?

Create a questionnaire about energy for the rest of the school.
How green is our class?
How green is our school?

Closing Activity - Designing Posters

Design posters to encourage children in the school to save water, save energy, recycle etc, or displaying the results of any surveys.
Laminate and put up in relevant places.



Environment Club

Summer Term

Celebration of Grounds

Warm up - Where am I?

Children think of a special place in their school grounds. They describe it (without giving too much away) while the other children try to guess the spot they are talking about.

Alternatively create a special School Grounds treasure hunt, encouraging the children to look out for special things

eg Find.....

- an unusual shape,
- a spotted leaf
- a beautiful colour
- a spiral
- something magical
- a goblins home

Main Activity - Special Places

Talk about what parts of the grounds the children find special and why.

In groups, children take a digital camera and take pictures of special parts or features of the grounds. They might choose a special place or a close up of a particularly beautiful leaf.

Print off the photos, caption and make a display for the rest of the school.

Closing Activity - Garden Party

Invite parents / friends to pick up early, and invite them to share a drink and biscuit in the grounds. Children take them on a tour of the area showing special places and talking about the different things they have done.