



Walk in My Shoes Autumn Nature Wellbeing Activity Book

This Autumn Nature Wellbeing Activity Book for primary school children has lots of activities to encourage young people to connect with nature and spend time outdoors for their wellbeing.



Why did we develop this Autumn Nature Wellbeing Activity Book?



Connecting with nature supports our wellbeing

Spending time outdoors during the day, whether during the school day or after, is beneficial for children's mental health and wellbeing. Taking time out in nature every day can help students to remember to take time for themselves. Being out in nature can be a nice break from the pressures of school, daily activities and a busy routine, and it helps to create a calming environment that supports good mental health.

Getting some sunshine, fresh air and exercise helps to boost our mood, and spending time outdoors and taking movement breaks can help students to focus and pay attention when back in the classroom. Outdoor activities like Autumn seed and leaf gathering exercises are great learning opportunities for children outside of the classroom and such activities encourage students to work together and use their imaginations throughout the process.

Supporting students to connect to nature can enhance their belonging and how they connect with the world around them. It supports students to play their part in looking after the natural world to preserve it for future generations.

Walk in My Shoes (WIMS) recognises the many different ways in which students learn, and this Activity Book is designed to be as inclusive to all learning styles as possible. Within this Activity Booklet, you will find a combination of indoor and outdoor activities.

We hope that the combination of classroom and outdoor activities, and experiential learning, will prove to have something for everyone!

The WIMS Team

Outdoor activities:

Activity 1: Autumn seed gathering

Spending time in nature and being active, helps us to stay healthy and supports our wellbeing!

This seed gathering guide is designed to help primary school students engage in a hands-on activity that connects them with nature, teaches them about our native tree species and encourages the class to work together to gather and grow their seeds.

Teachers/Parents' corner:

Use this opportunity to discuss the importance of native trees in supporting biodiversity and wellbeing. Encourage students to reflect on how the activity makes them feel.

Consider planting some of the seeds in your school garden or a community space, which contributes to the local ecosystem and provides a lasting legacy for students to enjoy. This could be a nice activity for students in 6th class to mark their time in the school; an opportunity to leave behind something that will continue to grow for years to come.

This seed gathering activity is not only an engaging way to connect with nature but also an opportunity for children to learn about the importance of taking time out to look after themselves, and the importance of looking after the environment.



Collecting your seeds:

- Before starting your seed collection make sure the area is safe. Look out for any steep banks or thorns. Be careful when collecting the seeds and have an adult help as needed.
- If not collecting in a public place like school grounds, or a park or forest that allows seed gathering, make sure you have the landowner's permission to gather the seeds.
- Bring along small baskets, bags or envelopes to collect the seeds. Avoid using plastic bags as they can trap moisture and cause the seeds to spoil. Paper shopping bags work great for this activity!
- Gently pick the seeds from the ground or directly from the tree. Make sure not to damage the tree or its surroundings. *Tip: Collect seed that looks healthy and that the seeds are firm and undamaged, not showing any signs of mould or rot.*
- Make sure not to break any branches to get to the seeds! We want our trees to last for years to come!
- After collecting your seeds, store them on a paper towel in a cool dry place to remove any extra moisture before planting. *Tip: Once dry, store your seeds in envelopes with the name of the seed and date of collection to avoid getting them mixed up. Different seeds will grow best in different planting conditions.*

WIMS seed Identification Guide

TYPES OF SEEDS



Nuts:

oak, hazel, beech, chestnut



Winged seeds:

ash, sycamore, lime



Cones:

alder, birch, conifers

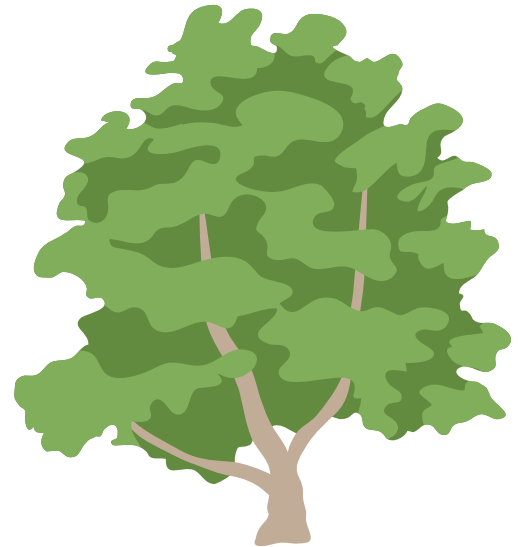
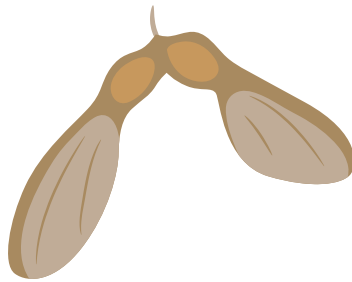
References from:

- Tree Council of Ireland Tree identification guide
- Teagasc.ie
- Treecouncil.org.uk

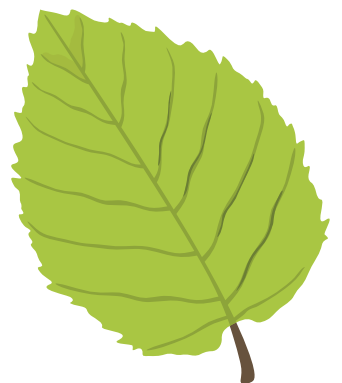




Horse Chestnut Tree (*Aesculus Hippocastanum*)



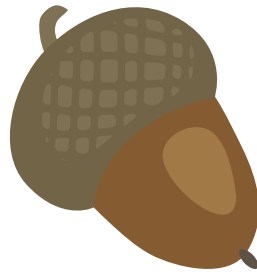
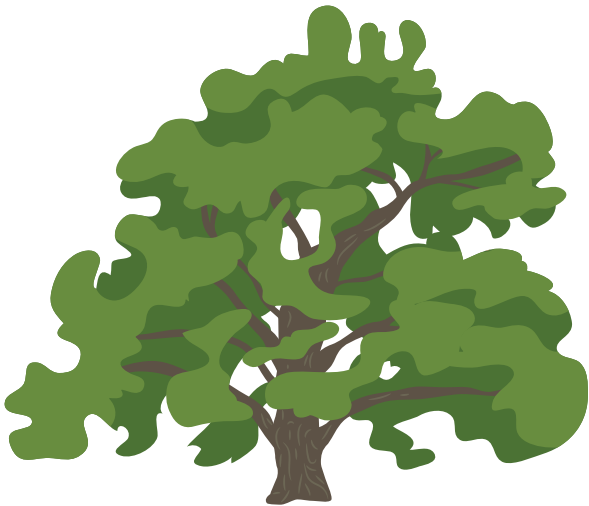
Sycamore Tree (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)



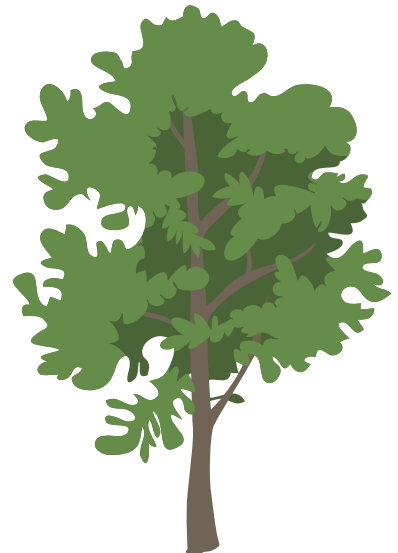
Beech Tree (*Fagus Sylvatica*)



Silver Birch Tree (*Betula Pendula*)



Oak Tree (*Quercus*)



Ash Tree (*Fraxinus Excelsior*)



Seed preparation:

Nuts: To prepare your nuts, remove the cups, twigs and any damaged nuts.

Tip: Drop your nuts into a bucket of water and throw away any seeds that float as these are less likely to grow when planted.

Wings: Simply remove the stalks and any other debris from winged seeds. The wings themselves do not need to be removed before planting.

Cones: To prepare your cones for planting you will need to gently dry them inside until they begin to open up. We do not recommend drying your cones on a radiator or in direct sunlight as this may damage the seeds.

Tip: When the cones begin to open put them in a paper bag and shake to release the seeds.

Planting your seeds:

Once your seeds are ready for planting, prepare small pots with soil.

Tip: Milk cartons (tetrapak) cut in half work great for planting seeds! Different seeds will need different planting conditions. We recommend following specific planting instructions for the seeds you gather based on the trees that grow in your local area.

For example, large seeds like acorns can be planted one per container about 1.5 times deeper than their size.

Remember to only put a small pinch of seeds in each container to give the seedlings lots of room to grow.

Happy planting!!



Activity 2: Autumn leaf pressing

Autumn leaves come in many colourful shapes and sizes. Students can collect lots of different leaves and follow WIMS Autumn leaf pressing guide to preserve them. The pressed leaves can then be used for arts and crafts projects or simply used to decorate the classroom for Autumn!

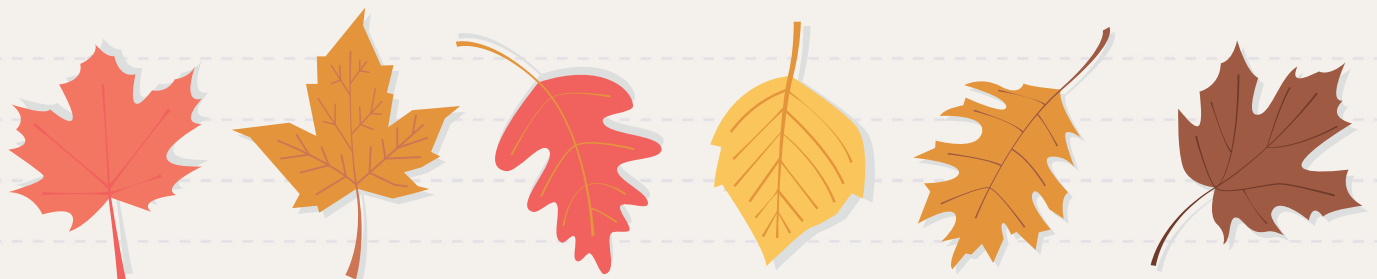
Activity:

- Before starting your leaf collection, make sure the area is safe. Look out for any steep banks or thorns. Be careful when collecting the leaves, and have an adult help as needed.
- If not collecting in a public place like school grounds, or a park or forest that allows leaf gathering, make sure you have the landowner's permission to gather the leaves.
- Bring along small baskets, bags or envelopes to collect the leaves. You can carry them in your hands but be careful not to damage the leaf. Paper shopping bags work great for this activity!
- Make sure not to break branches or damage any trees when collecting the leaves. You can pick the leaves up directly from the ground.
Tip: Gather some extra leaves. Sometimes it can take a few tries to prep the leaves for pressing as they can tear easily.
- Choose your leaves wisely. We recommend choosing a leaf that is colourful without lots of tears or breaks.
Tip: Pick a leaf that is not too dirty as you can see the colour better.

After gathering the leaves:

- Gently wipe your leaf with a dry cloth to remove any dirt or moisture.
Tip: Be very careful and gentle as leaves are very delicate.
- Open a heavy book and place down a sheet of paper.
Tip: you can use parchment paper, kitchen paper towel or newspaper for this.
- You can arrange your leaves on this sheet of paper, being careful not to overlap the leaves too much.
- Place another sheet of paper on top of the leaves.
- Close the heavy book and leave your leaves to dry for up to two weeks until they are fully dried and flattened.

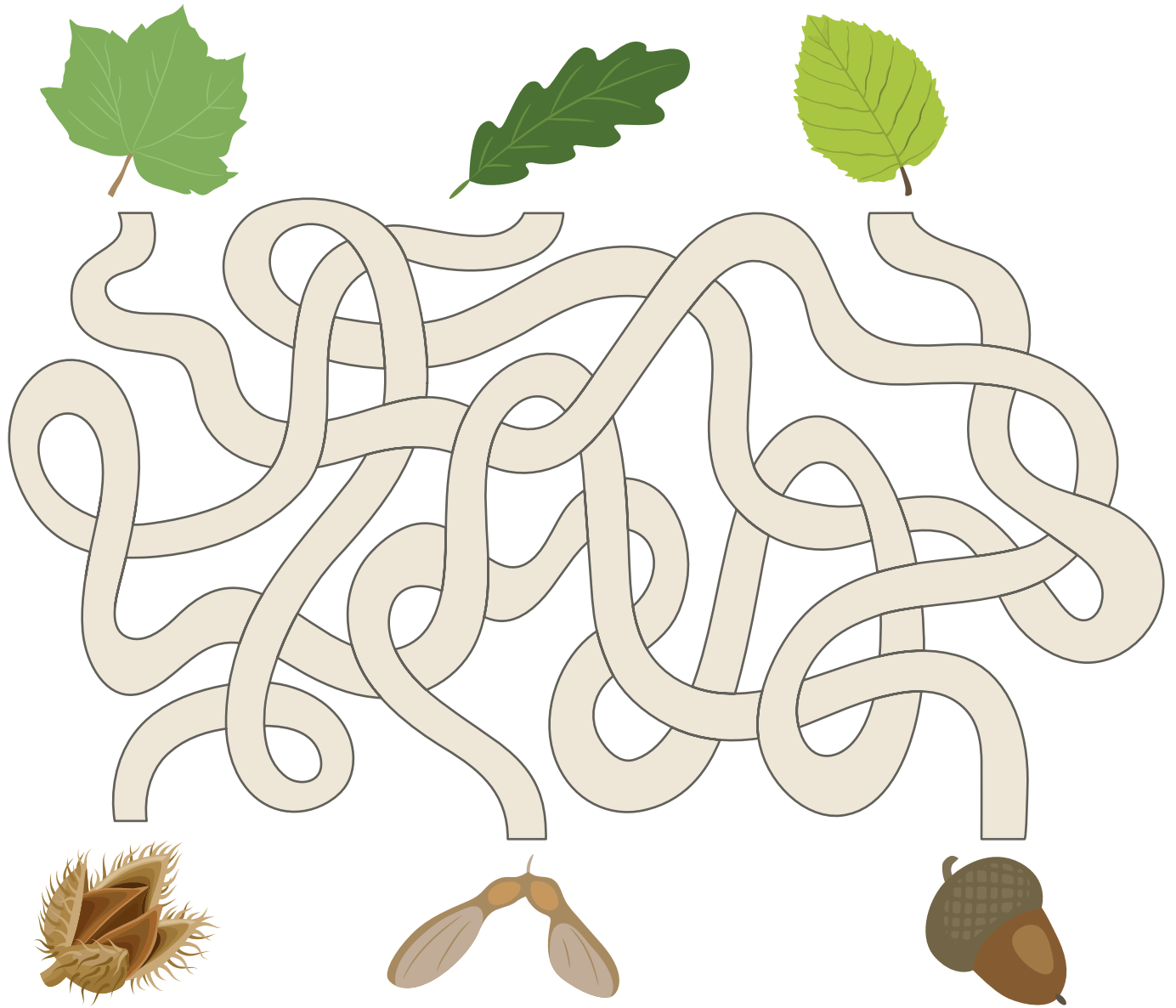
Optional: You can now use your dried leaves to create colourful autumn pictures or art!



Indoor activities:

Activity 1: WIMS classroom activity

Match the seed with the tree leaf:



Activity 2: Word Jumble

IWAETGNR ANC _ _ _ _ _

GLSNIEED _ _ _ _ _

TIANGLNP _ _ _ _ _

ESVOLG _ _ _ _ _

SEEB _ _ _ _ _

TPSOMOC _ _ _ _ _

WROG _ _ _ _ _

LOIS _ _ _ _ _

EDPAS _ _ _ _ _

OETSRF _ _ _ _ _

Activity 3: Word Search



A	P	H	S	A	K	O	E	Y	H	B	R
S	M	S	O	M	E	W	T	Y	L	S	W
W	H	R	A	T	S	O	P	M	O	C	A
Y	N	E	K	O	T	H	C	E	E	B	T
W	A	F	Y	T	C	S	A	S	C	H	E
S	T	I	G	W	O	E	R	Y	R	C	R
Y	U	N	S	K	A	E	T	C	E	R	I
T	R	O	W	E	L	D	A	A	T	I	N
Y	E	C	K	W	A	L	C	M	N	B	G
A	W	C	T	M	N	I	O	O	A	R	C
G	C	E	Y	W	C	N	R	R	L	I	A
A	C	W	L	S	P	G	N	E	P	B	N

Beech
Ash
Oak
Trowel
Planter

Compost
Watering can
Birch
Sycamore

Seedling
Nature
Acorn
Conifers



Activity 4: Spot the 6 Differences



Activity 5: Acrostic poem

Many of us love spending time in nature especially in Autumn time when there are many colourful leaves on the trees and all around us. Spending time outdoors can help us to relax and gives us a chance to enjoy the fresh air while connecting to the natural world.

Activity:

Work on your own or in a group to create an acrostic poem to write about how spending time in nature is good for us.

- Brainstorm words and phrases that help you to write about how nature helps you.
- The first letter of each line to start your sentence is there already.
- Fill in the rest of the lines to create your own poem.

Example: "Lots of people enjoy going for a walk in the forest with their family or with friends on a sunny day".

L _____

E _____

A _____

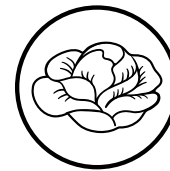
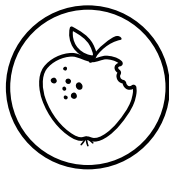
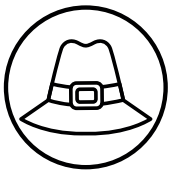
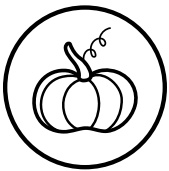
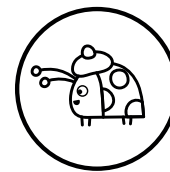
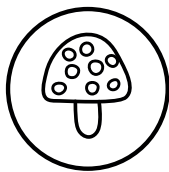
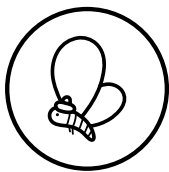
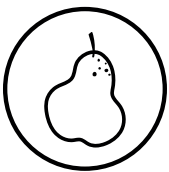
V _____

E _____

S _____



Activity 6: Find the hidden objects



Activity 7: Classroom wellbeing activity

Encourage your students to use their imaginations, relax and listen to this mindfulness nature meditation.

This short meditation could be used at the end of each day or the end of the week on a Friday afternoon. Using meditation can help children to learn the skills of taking 'time out' (space for themselves) and can help them to leave any thoughts or worries about the day or week behind.

Nature meditation – Leaves on a Stream


Watch the nature meditation video here




For more nature-related classroom activities, visit:
<https://www.treecouncil.ie/wild-things-at-school>


For more wellbeing activities, visit walkinmyshoes.ie

To keep up-to-date on all WIMS activities,
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