



Autumn adventures

Autumn is a really amazing time in the forest, with the leaves from deciduous trees turning a rainbow of colours. Try these activities to explore the forest during this time of change as many plants and animals prepare for winter.

These activities are aimed at 4 to 11-year-olds but can be adapted for any age.

You will need:

- Paper
- Pencil
- Heavy books
- Worksheet

Setting the scene

Seeking out autumn sounds



Listen

Walk through a pile of fallen leaves or try stomping on them. Pick up a handful and squeeze them.

- **How many sounds can you make using autumn leaves?**
- **Can you think of any words to describe the sounds they make?**

Noticing autumn colours



Look

Leaves are green because they contain a pigment called chlorophyll which trees use to make food when the sun shines on them. In autumn, there is less sunlight, so they get rid of the chlorophyll revealing other colours underneath.

- **Hunt around the forest and see how many differently coloured leaves there are.**



Get creative



Leaf explosions

Collect a mixture of differently coloured leaves, then clear a patch on the ground.

- **Create your own explosion picture by arranging the leaves in coloured circles or patterns.**



Only choose fallen leaves and do not pick any that are still growing.



Natural dyes

Draw an autumn picture, perhaps of trees or woodland creatures. Then use natural items you find on the forest floor to colour the picture in. For example, rub blackberries onto the page for purple or use soil for brown.

- **What colours will your leaves make?**
- **How many colours can you create?**

Autumn life

Cache collector

In autumn, squirrels collect nuts and seeds to bury in 'caches' which they scatter in hiding places around the forest. They have a good memory and sense of smell which helps to locate their caches in winter.

- **Try being a squirrel!** Hide some seeds or nuts. Then do a different activity and afterwards see if you can remember where you hid them.

Leaf pressing

Take some colourful leaves home.

- **Press them between sheets of paper and place under a heavy book for a week.**
- **Once dried use them to make a collage.**

Do at home



Be a bat detector

Visit the forest on a warm evening at dusk. Wait at the edge of a treeline, or in a clearing near some water. Can you spot any bats flying around?

- **What do you think they are feeding on?**
- **Why do they come out at night?**



Hunting for homes

Lots of animals live in the forest, but where are their homes? Look all around as you explore.

- Can you spot any?
- Can you see evidence of any leaves or nuts being nibbled by animals that live nearby?

Preparing for winter

Many woodland animals hibernate. They become inactive and sleep a lot in winter when there is little to eat.

- If you were a woodland creature, where would you make your winter home?

Get active

Autumn seeds

Many trees produce seeds in autumn which fall to the forest floor. Search for some and try the games below.

Sycamore helicopters

Sycamore seeds are easy to spot as they spin like mini helicopters. See how long you can keep one in the air.

Pine cone skittles

Use pine cones as skittles and the cases of chestnuts as a bowling ball - how many can you knock over?

Conkers

Conkers come from horse chestnut trees. Ask an adult to pierce a hole in your conker so you can thread through a 30 cm length of string and tie a knot at the end. Hold your conkers out in front of you at arm's length and take turns to try and hit each other's conker.



The spiny cases of chestnuts are call burrs.



Earn your stamp

To earn your stamp, fill in the worksheet or take photos and tell us about the activities, including which was your favourite. Email a copy of your work, along with your name, age and the place you visited, to us at learning.english@forestryengland.uk.



Worksheet



Autumn sounds

What sounds did you make with the leaves? How did you make them?

Natural dyes

Draw an autumn picture and colour it in using natural dyes.

Tear up leaves and grass or squish them with a drop of water to release colour.



Worksheet



Bat detector

Why do bats come out at dusk?

Autumn seeds

What different seeds did you find? Tick the box for any you have seen and write in your own.



☐ Pine cone



☐ Horse chestnut



☐ Fir cone



☐ Sycamore



☐ Acorn



☐ Beechnut



☐ Sweet chestnut



☐ Hazelnut

Which was your favourite activity? Have you learned anything new?
