Hello and Season's Greetings,

We hope that this nature activity pack finds you well, and that you have enjoyed watching the vibrant colours of Autumn unfold in the trees where you are.

As the days get colder and wetter, and the nights get longer and darker, it can become harder to get outside and to look after our own wellbeing. At Wild at Heart we like to combat these 'Winter Blues' with Winter Wellbeing tips - by dressing up warmly, bringing a raincoat and umbrella, and treating yourself to a nice warm cup of tea or hot chocolate during or after your walk, you can still enjoy the cold weather and all the good it brings being in nature.

We hope you enjoy getting out for some fresh wintery walks and that you get a chance to make some of your own festive decorations for the holidays.

We have updated our Wild at Heart webpage, and have included lots of activities and ideas and information on our 'Resources to Explore' page which we think you might enjoy. So if you have access to the internet you can find it at:
www.wildsheffield.com/discover/your-community/wild-at-heart

If you notice something beautiful in nature this Winter or make your own festive crafts, please do feel free to send us your photos to our Facebook messenger at www.facebook.com/WildatHeartproject or email us at J.King@wildsheffield.com.

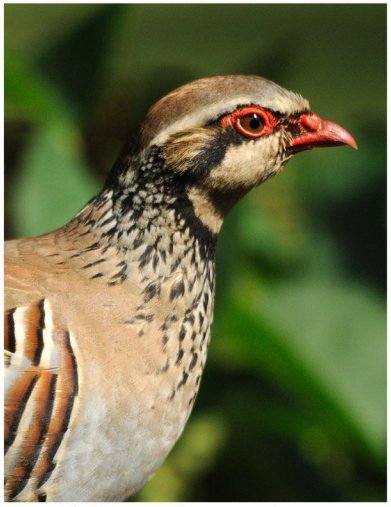
Stay Wild!

With very best wishes,

Jenny, Susan & Jess

Cadent Foundation
COMMUNITY FUND

Festive wildlife detective



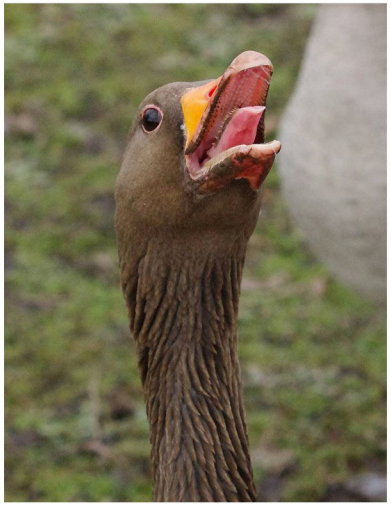
A red-legged partridge (pear tree optional)

Two collared doves

Three pheasant hens

Four calling birds

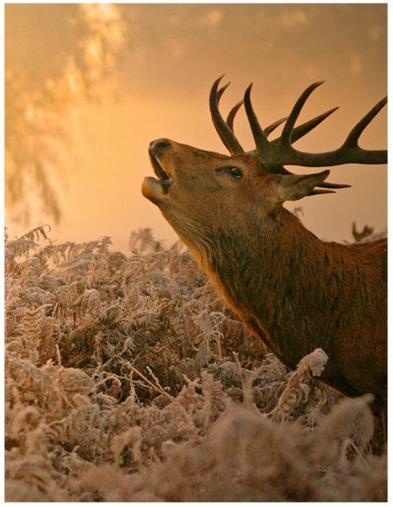
Five cold things



Six geese-a-braying

Seven swans-a-swimming

Eight glades-a-tinkling



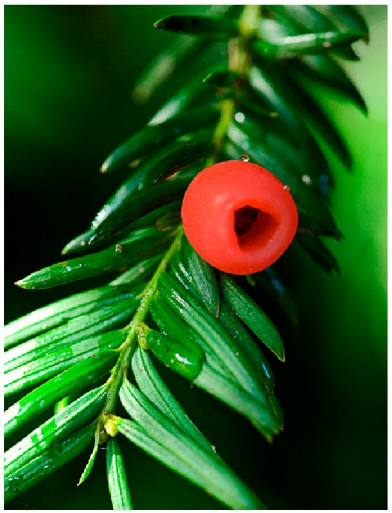
Nine red deer prancing

Ten paws-a-creeping

www.wildlifewatch.org.uk

Credits: Red-legged partridge, collared dove, pheasant and footprints in snow (c) Amy Lewis / Robin (c) Harry Hogg / Mistletoe (c) Zsuzsanna Bird / Greylag goose (c) Gillian Day / Mute swan (c) Neil Aldridge / Frosty landscape (c) David Mather / Red deer (c) Jon Hawkins

Winter nuts and berries



Yew berries

Acorns

Ivy berries

Conkers

Rose hips

Beech nuts

Holly berries

Crab apples

Rowan berries

Hawthorn berries

www.wildlifewatch.org.uk

Yew (c) Les Binns / Acorn, Ivy, Horse chestnut, Beech nuts and Rowan (c) northeastwildlife.co.uk / Holly, Rose hips, Crab apples and Hawthorn (c) Philip Precey

Wild at Heart

Be wild, whatever your age

Grow Your Own Festive Wreath

Bringing greenery inside the home when all is dark and dismal is an age old tradition.

With a bit of pre-planning you can make your own festive wreath from natural materials – far more attractive, unique and much better for the planet!

There's loads of wildlife benefits to growing your own wreath - all through the growing season your plants will be providing nectar, pollen and habitat for all sorts of wildlife, there will be plenty of berries and seeds for birds to eat, as well as creating little nooks and crannies for insects to overwinter in.

Come December, you can collect some of the material for your own enjoyment too!

Having a bit of colour and interest certainly lifts the spirits when the days are short and cold. Plus the satisfaction from creating something wonderful and the little smiles it generates every time you see it or someone asks you where you "bought" it from!

Even the act of going out on a nature walk to collect extra natural materials is a mood booster.

Plants to grow in your garden to use in wreath-making

The list is of course endless - here are some to start with.

Foliage
Ivy, Rosemary, Sage

Berries
Pyracanthus, Cotoneaster

Flowering Shrubs -
Viburnum, Winter Flowering Jasmine, Sedum, Skimmia, Mahonia etc

Flexible, structural plants to use to make your hoop base - dog wood, willow, hazel, bramble

Plants to grow in your garden and harvest in the summer / autumn and dry until needed.

- Honesty
- Oriental Poppy (seed heads)
- Teasels
- Echinops
- Sea Holly
- Hydrangea
- Lavender
- Allium Flower heads
- Ornamental Grasses

You can also dry annuals like cornflowers, Love in a Mist seed heads, ammi majus – these all keep their shape and can look beautiful when dried. Simply cut in summer when they are at their best, tie a rubber band around the stems and hang upside down in a cool, dry, dark place and forget about them until December!

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Items to forage whilst out on a nature walk

Guidelines for Foraging – Fallen items are best - think about nature, only collect things that are in abundance, only take what you need – leave plenty for wildlife, so as not to have a detrimental effect on the plant and the ecosystem.

All wild plants are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). It is illegal to dig up or remove a whole plant (including algae, lichens and fungi) from the land on which it is growing without permission from the landowner or occupier. Some species like orchids are specially protected against picking, uprooting, damage and sale.

A list of these can be found on Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981).

Evergreens/Conifers

Small pieces of Noble Fir, Pine, Spruce, Larch, Leyland Cypress, Holly, Laurel, Fern etc.

Structural material for base

Dogwood, willow, bramble, birch and hazel all work well

Natural treasures to embellish your wreath

- **Pine cones** (collect in the autumn)
- **Fruit & Berries** – to add colour - Hawthorn / Buckthorn berries. Rowan, Late black berries, Crab apples, Quince, Rosehips.
- **The fluffy seed heads of "Travellers Joy"**
- **Feathers**

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How to create your wreath

Gather your materials

- Secateurs
- Cotton thread – can be used to attach material to your wreath

Optional

- Floristry wire – can be useful for attaching items to your wreath.
- Hessian to make and extra bows and ribbons

Make your hoop base.

Use your flexible, freshly cut or pre-soaked willow, dog wood or hazel to shape into a circle. The size of this circle will determine your wreath size - shorter length will create a perfectly attractive mini-wreath. Twist the end in so they push against each other to hold the shape. Continue to weave and twist the willow etc. Add a few more lengths to give the hoop structural integrity. A good tip is to overlap joins. Wait until you a happy with the thickness of the wreath before clipping the willow to improve the shape.

Attach the greenery first - this is where your evergreen foliage will come into play. You can use the natural gaps in your willow base to push the stems of the cuttings into. If you think they need to be more firmly attached you can use the cotton or floristry wire.

Experiment with colours and texture of different plants. See what fits the look that you're going for!

Then add some colourful embellishments. Things like berries, seed and flower heads. Use the natural treasure that you saved back in Summer. For an unknown (!) artistic reason – an odd number of items seems to hold people's attention better, try adding, 3, 5 7 or even 9(!) of one of your treasures and see what you think. Add your berries last of all – they are delicate and will easily fall from your cutting.

Your wreath will last about a month – you could always revamp it each week, changing its look to suit your mood. Once the festive period is over and it is time to take down your wreath, you could add it into you compost heap to be retaken back into the natural world.

Add some garden twine to make a loop to attach your wreath to your front door, ready to spread cheer over the Festive season.

If you enjoyed making it – why not make one for your neighbour too!

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Wild at Heart

Be wild, whatever your age

Christmas Paper Chains

Make your own Paper Chains to hang up as homemade Christmas Decorations!

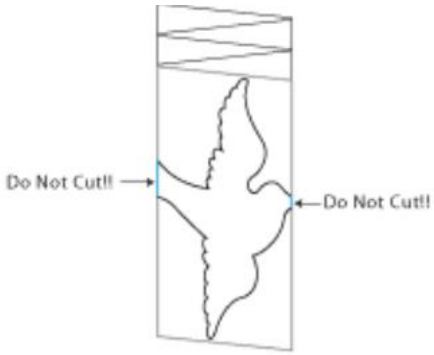
What you need:

- A4 Blank Paper
- Scissors
- Pen or pencil
- Optional colouring pencils or paints to decorate

Steps:

1. Fold and cut the blank sheet of paper in half, lengthways to give two paper strips.
2. Take each paper strip and fold it accordion-style to give 5 sides of paper 4.25 inches by 2.125 inches in size like this:

3. On the front fold of paper, draw on the template – you can trace using the Christmas-themed templates on the back of this activity sheet if you like.
4. With the paper strip folded and your template at the top, cut along the traced lines of your Christmas shape – careful you do not cut the left and right hand edges off, those need to stay put to attach it to the rest of the chain!



5. Decorate your paper chain and hang it up!

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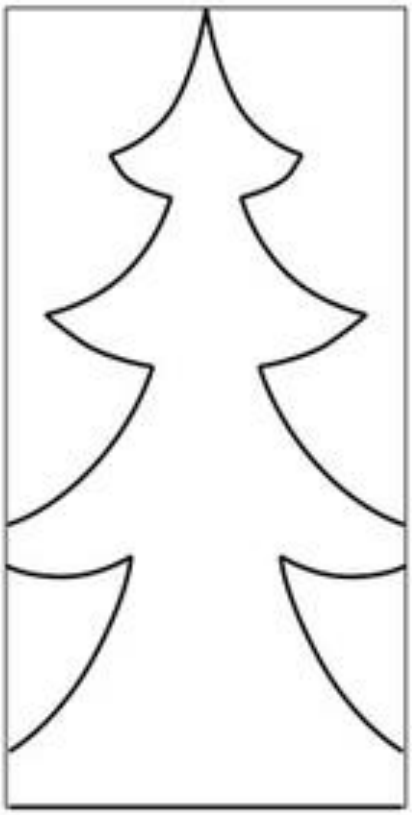

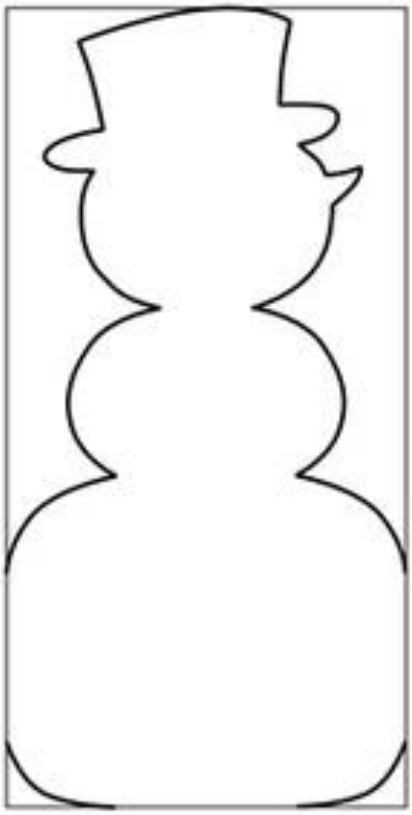

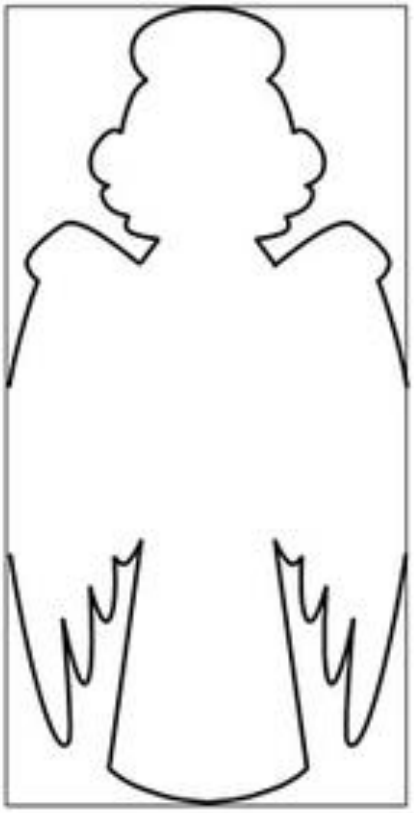

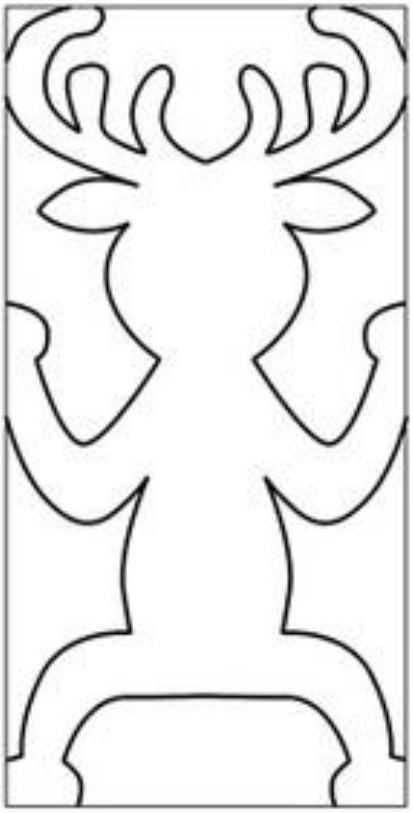

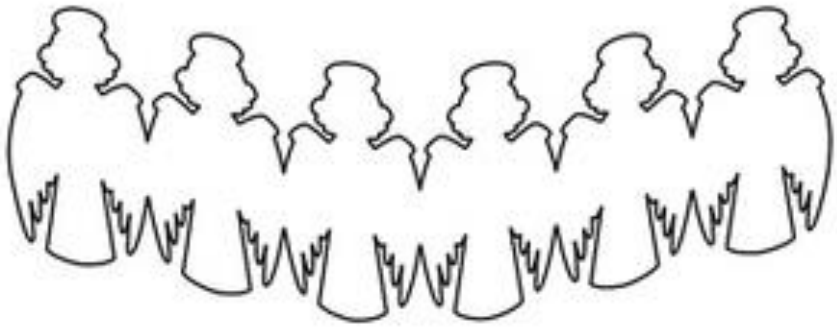

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Winter Seasonal Soup

Vegetable soups are perfect for making the most of what is in season and using up what's in the cupboard.

At this time of year there's nothing better than hearty, warming soups made with a variety of delicious late winter vegetables.

In this soup the base of onion and carrots is enhanced with various root veg. Over the winter root veg are at their best. This is where the plant stores all its energy to regrow the following year.

This means that the roots like carrots, parsnip, swede, potatoes etc. are all packed full of nutrients. You could add early nettle leaves to this vegetable soup as they will start to grow as the days lengthen.

Ingredients – serves 4

- 3 large garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 large onion
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 parsnips, diced
- 3 sticks celery, sliced
- 2 small leeks, sliced
- 200g dried red lentils
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 1 tbsp fresh thyme leaves
- 1 tbsp vegetable bouillon powder / stock cube
- 1 heaped tsp ground coriander
- 1 heaped tsp ground paprika
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- Salt and pepper

Method

1. Chop all the vegetables.
2. Fry the garlic and onion until brown.
3. Fry the vegetables (carrots, parsnips, celery, leeks) until softened.
4. Add the rest of the ingredients (lentils, tomato puree, thyme leaves, vegetable stock, coriander, paprika, cumin, salt and pepper).
5. Pour over 1.2 litres boiling water from the kettle, then stir well.
6. Cover and leave to simmer for 30 mins until the vegetables and lentils are tender.
7. Ladle into bowls and eat straightaway. Serve with chunks of crusty bread.
8. As you like it:

   Use milk instead of half of the boiled water if you prefer a creamy soup.

   Blend the soup with a hand blender if you prefer a smooth soup.

Here is a list of fruits and vegetables which are in season during the late winter in the UK.

- Beetroot
- Brussels Sprouts
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Celeriac
- Cabbage
- Field mushrooms
- Kale
- Leeks
- Parsnips
- Potatoes
- Shallots
- Onions
- Swede
- Turnips
- Carrots - stored over winter

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How the Robin got its Redbreast

This is an old folktale, often told around the fire in the cold dark nights of winter, about how the Robin got its Redbreast. There are many different versions of this tale, you may have your own to tell! This is the one I was told as a child, and I think the message of the story is that no matter how small you might feel, you have the strength within you to make a big difference to those around you.

Long ago, when wolves roamed the land, there lived a father and his son. They were the Keepers of the Forest. As winter settled in, the land was covered in a blanket of ice and snow.

They kept a fire burning day and night. During the day, the small boy tended the fire and overnight his father kept the fire burning. The fire brought warmth and light to all the land.

One day, the father had to go away, overnight. He told his son that he would have to tend the fire while he was away and made him promise not to fall asleep. The boy agreed.

A hungry wolf watched from the trees and that night he saw the boy becoming sleepy. His eyes began to close. The boy sang to the fire to help him stay awake.

The wolf prowled silently among the trees, watching and waiting for the boy to fall asleep. The flames of the fire slowly died down and the glowing embers began to fade. The wolf crept slowly from the forest towards the sleeping boy.

From the undergrowth in the forest, a small brown bird was watching. As the wolf approached the boy the bird flew past him, as quick as a flash.

She began to fan the glowing embers of the fire with her tiny wings until the fire burst into life again. The flames were hot, and they burned the feathers on the little bird's breast until they were bright red. The wolf slunk back into the forest.

The little bird felt the pain from the heat of the flames, but she didn't mind. She was brave and strong. Although she was very little, her impact on the world - and the people around her - was very big, indeed. We can remember this whenever we see the robin's red breast.

Winter Eyes

by Douglas Florian

Look at winter

With winter eyes

As smoke curls from rooftops

To clear cobalt skies.

Breathe in winter

Past winter nose:

The sweet scent of black birch

Where velvet moss grows.

Walk through winter

With winter feet

On crackling ice

Or sloshy wet sleet.

Look at winter

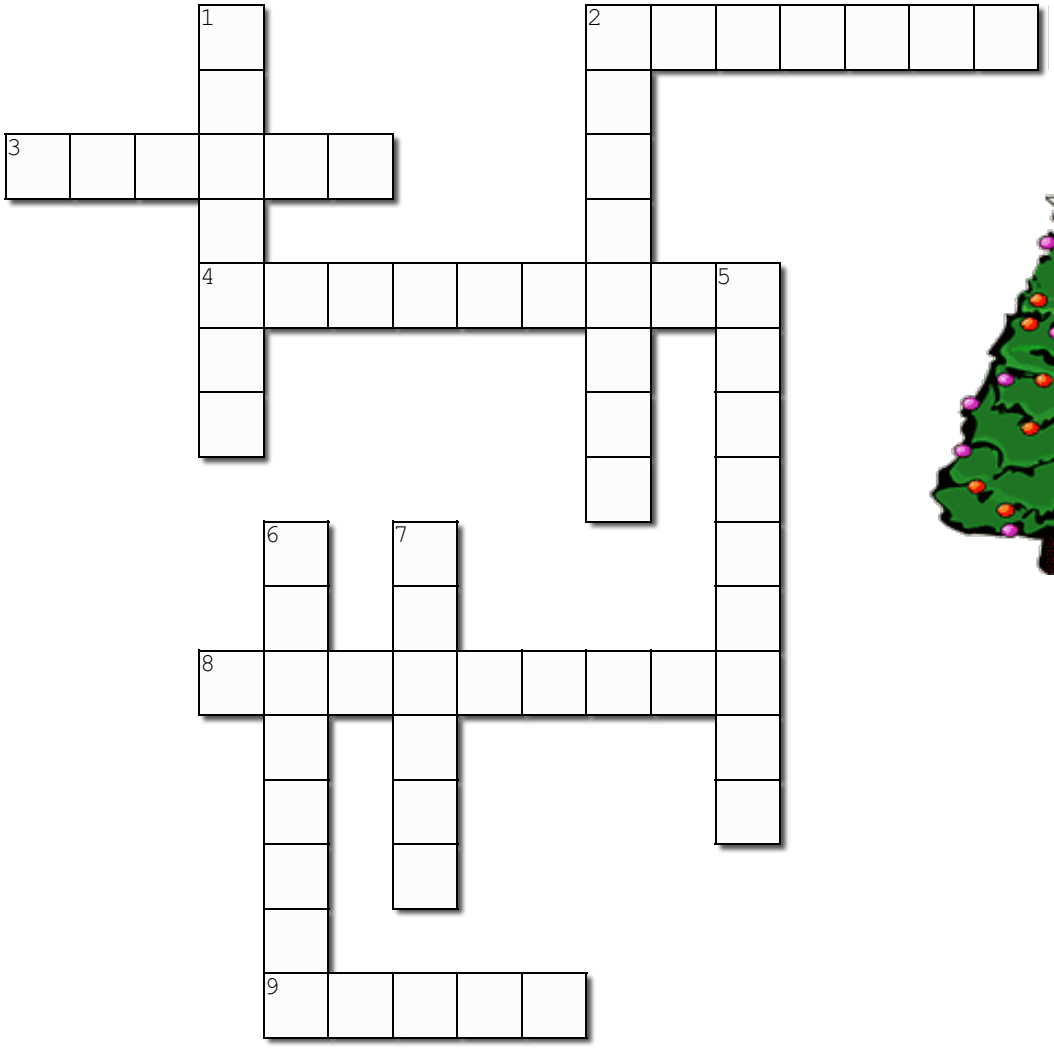
With winter eyes:

The rustling of oak leaves

As spring slowly nears.

Festive Crossword

All these words are associated with Christmas and the Festive season, see if you can guess them all!



Created using the Crossword Maker on TheTeachersCorner.net

Across

2. Made of beeswax, and creates little lights around the house
3. Traditional songs sung at Christmas
4. The plant you kiss underneath at Christmas
8. Under the mantlepiece, and good at warming up cold toes!
9. Small common bird, also known as the 'Redbreast'

Down

1. A person made out of snow, carrot, and hat!
2. The nut that we roast at Christmas time, grows on trees in UK
5. What do you call trees, like Christmas Trees, which never lose their leaves?
6. What animals pull Santa's sleigh?
7. A circle made of greenery hung on the front door at Christmas

Created with TheTeachersCorner.net Word Search Maker

British Deciduous Trees Word Search

Winter is a great time to get to know the trees that grow in your local area.
Deciduous trees are the ones which drop their leaves in winter.
Can you find the names of these common deciduous trees?

E	N	A	D	U	B	W	A	R	U	S	E	J	W	U	F	K	I	Q	Q
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Y	X	P	A	N	D	A	V	O	Z	T	S	U	I	I	N	S	E	L	J

Sweet Chestnut
Beech
Field Maple
Holly
Elder
Common Lime
Horse Chestnut
Rowan
Sycamore
Hawthorn
Wild Cherry
English Oak
London Plane
Willow
Silver Birch
Crab Apple
White Poplar
Hazel

Just Color

Just Color

A–Z of Nature Connection and Wellbeing

Sheffield & Rotherham Wild at Heart
Be wild, whatever your age

We are celebrating the great variety of ways we can use nature to improve our mental and physical wellbeing. So join in and see if you can do something each day to boost your wellbeing and nature connection! **#AtoZWildWellbeing**

A **Active:** Get active and go for a walk around your local park, or jog on the spot!

B **Beauty:** Finding beauty makes us feel good, and beauty is everywhere in nature!

C **Compassion and Connect:** Put out food or make a home for wildlife.

D **Dance:** Put some music on and dance! It's great for exercise and for boosting your mood.

E **Emotion:** How does nature make you feel? An emotional connection to nature is really important for wellbeing.

F **Foraging:** Pick some wild blackberries, raspberries or apples and make a crumble!

G **Give:** Make a flower posie or a nature craft and give it to someone as a thoughtful gift.

H **Hello:** Say hello to your favourite street tree – what makes it special?

I **Identify an Insect:** Easily overlooked, but colourful, ingenious and incredible!

J **Journal:** Fill your nature journal with a garden visitor record, pressed flowers, leaf rubbings, sketches, & poems!

K **Keep Learning:** Let nature be your teacher – learn to paint, to bake bread, or the names of butterflies!

L **Look Closely:** Beauty is in the detail, so marvel at the tiny world of mosses, mushrooms, minibeasts, and lichens.

M **Mindfulness:** Slow down, breathe, and focus on the peaceful sensations of nature.

N **Notice Nature:** Use a pencil and sketchbook or a camera to help you really notice nature.

O **Observation Walk:** Go outside and spend some time just watching a bee, a bird, or a tree.

P **Painting and Poetry:** Get creative and express what nature means to you on paper.

Q **Question:** Be curious! Question how birds fly, or how bees communicate, then Google it!

R **Recipes:** Home-cooking is healthy, fun and cheaper than eating out, so why not make your own seasonal soup!

S **Senses:** Use each of your 5 senses in turn to explore your garden or your local park.

T **Three Good Nature Things:** Look for 3 good things in nature which make you happy.

U **Urban Wildlife:** Appreciate the nature on your doorstep – the wallflower, crow, and fox!

V **View:** Open your window and take in the colours and shapes of the clouds in the sky.

W **Write to a Friend:** Write a letter to someone to show you care and stay connected.

X **Exhale and Inhale:** Use calming breaths to slow down and ground yourself.

Y **Yoga:** Use simple Yoga exercises to de-stress, and improve your physical wellbeing too.

Z **Zzz Sleep:** Unwind before bed using nature sounds to help you to get a good night's sleep.

We hope this A-Z has helped you connect with nature. Why not share what you have done on our **Facebook** page or email us at: **j.king@wildsheffield.com**.

Rotherham Social Prescribing Service – Health in your hands
Connecting Steps
Cadent Foundation
COMMUNITY FUND
HERITAGE FUND

How you can use your everyday surroundings to tap into nature

Look up at the sky

Use nature to shift your perspective of an urban scene

How many colours can you see?

Slow down and watch an insect for a while

Find three good things in nature

Meet a tree

Take a few moments just to pause, be still and breathe deeply

Look closely at the mosses growing on the wall

Discover the beauty of what is growing in the walls and on the pavement

For nature, for everyone