



# Go Wild for Trees

Activity pack

**Cheshire**  
Wildlife Trust



# Wonderful woodlands

## What's inside

Wonderful woodlands.....02-03

Activities.....13-15

Right tree, right place..... 04-06

Your local woodland.....16

How to plant a tree.....07-09

Stay connected.....17

Woodland detective.....10-12



## Did you know?

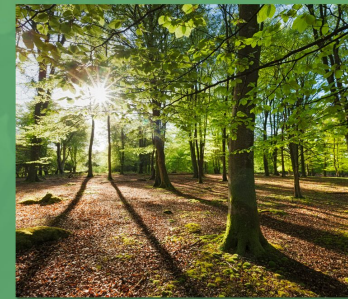
8,000 years ago much of Britain would have been forested. A great wild wood would have been home to wolves, bears, beavers and wild boar!

We live in the least wooded county in England, but we can bring our lost woodlands back.

This booklet is packed full of information about our native woodlands and tips for how you can plant trees in your gardens and communities.



These leafy, magical wonderlands provide solace, are home to wildlife, soak up carbon from the atmosphere and are an important natural solution to the climate crisis. They take CO2 from the atmosphere helping to reduce global warming!



UK woodlands cover approximately 13% of our land and are estimated to soak up around 12 million tonnes of carbon dioxide every year in the UK!

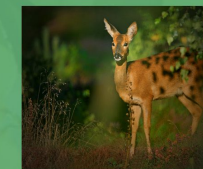
Planting trees also helps guard against soil erosion, reduces the effects of flooding and absorbs air pollution. Best of all, they're great for wildlife!

Incredibly, a single oak tree could have over 2,300 different species living in it! Below are just some of the species that call our native woodlands home.

Turn to page 10 to discover what you might find in your local woodland this autumn and winter.



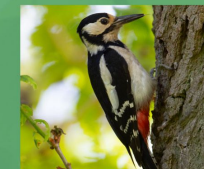
Tawny owls



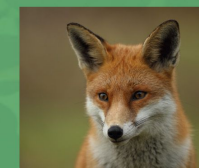
Roe deer



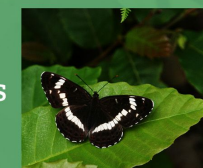
Fungi



Woodpecker



Red foxes



White admiral



# Right tree, right place



## Choosing your tree

The thing to remember is to plant the right tree in the right place. Whilst oak trees might host thousands of species, they are often too big for most gardens.

Species like rowan, crab apple and hawthorn are perfect for the garden. They also provide flowers for pollinators and fruit for wintering bird and mammals.

### Rowan



A rowan tree can stand for up to 200 years! It is well known for its masses of red berries that attract all kinds of birds.

**Fun fact:** It's also known as 'mountain ash' because of the ash-like shape of its leaves and its preference for upland areas.

### Crab apple

The crab apple is familiar as a small tree that produces yellow-green, rounded fruit. It can be found in woods and hedges.

**Fun fact:** The crab apple is a close relative of the domestic apple, which is descended from a central Asian species.



### Hawthorn



In May, common hawthorn erupts with masses of creamy-white blossom. During autumn and winter, red fruits known as 'haws' appear.

**Fun fact:** Features in many traditional May Day celebrations and is often called May-tree.

For more suggested species for your garden, visit [cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/actions/how-plant-tree](http://cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/actions/how-plant-tree)



Planting trees can be brilliant, but it's really important to make sure you pick the right tree for your outdoor space.

### How big will it get?



Some trees are small enough to be grown in containers, others not so much. Make sure you know exactly how big to expect your tree to grow and how far the canopy will spread. You should only really grow big trees like English oak, common beech and alder if you have a very big garden.

### Where should I plant it?

Take care when planting near a house. As a general rule, you should plant a tree at least its mature height away from the nearest building.



### When should I plant it?



The best time of year to plant a tree is when the roots are dormant as they are less easily disturbed by the moving process. Typically, from mid-November to late March is the best time.



# How to plant a tree



# How to plant a tree

It might surprise you, but even the smallest of gardens can accommodate a tree! Planting trees is a great way to enhance your garden. They offer shade, a natural windbreak and a little more privacy. It's also a great way to attract more wildlife into your garden, giving them space to breed, shelter and hibernate.

## Step 1



Make sure the roots are submerged in a bucket of water for two hours before planting. Exposed roots don't do well – the root hairs dry easily and quickly die.

## Step 2

Dig a hole at least double the width of the root ball. Keep the topsoil and mix it with some peat-free compost. Break up the soil at the bottom of the hole. Trees over 1.5m tall will need some support, so pop a metre-long stake in the ground.



## Step 3



Place your tree in the centre of the hole and spread the roots, making sure that it's deep enough that the soil lines up with the soil mark on the stem.

## Step 4



Spread the soil mix carefully around the roots. Compact the soil around the tree and gently tug it to make sure it's secure. Water generously to settle the soil and tether the tree to the stake (if you're using one).

## Step 5

Don't forget about your tree! Water daily for the first two weeks and then weekly for the first year. Regularly check the soil is firm around the tree. Remember to loosen tethers as your tree grows. The stake can be removed after three years.



## Get involved in community tree planting

We work with local councils to help coordinate tree planting days and offer advice.

- Keep an eye on our website for community tree planting days



- Get in touch if you're a community group and would like to run a tree planting day

- We can offer corporate volunteer days

- Contact us for advice on how to identify sites which might be suitable to plant trees.





# Woodland detective



## Woodland wildlife in autumn



Conker



Jay



Grey squirrel



Beech mast



Nuthatch



Crane fly



Fly agaric



Wood mouse



Acorn



Puffballs

[www.wildlifewatch.org.uk](http://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk)

Credits: Conker and Grey squirrel (c) Amy Lewis / Jay and Wood mouse (c) Margaret Holland / Beech (c) Gillian Day / Nuthatch (c) Jon Hawkins / Crane fly (c) Richard Burkmar / Fly agaric (c) Neil Aldridge / Acorn (c) Szusanna Bird / Puffballs (c) Les Binns

## Woodland wildlife in winter



Brambling



Robin



Coal tit



Holly



Wren



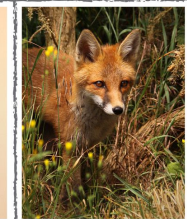
Woodcock



Jelly ear fungi



Siskin



Fox



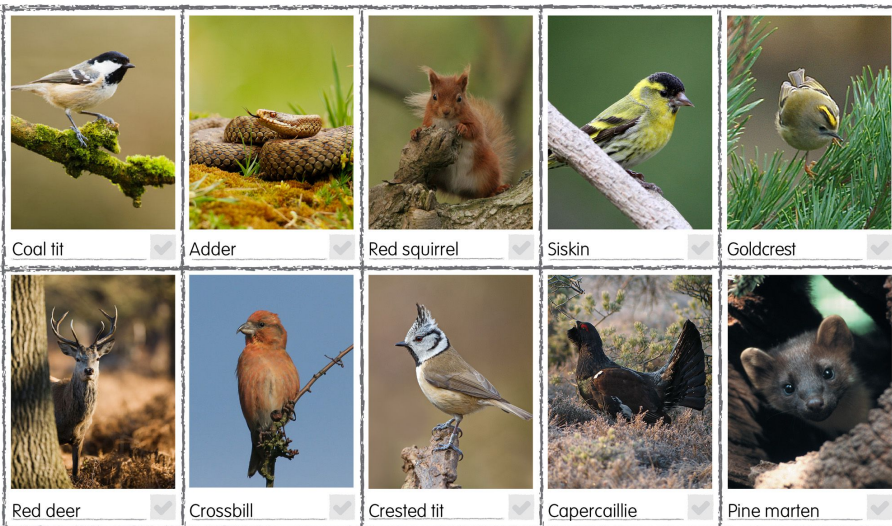
Goldcrest

[www.wildlifewatch.org.uk](http://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk)

Credits: Brambling and Siskin (c) Harry Hogg / Robin (c) Amy Lewis / Coal tit (c) Scott Petrek / Holly (c) Philip Precey / Wren and Woodcock (c) Margaret Holland / Jelly ear fungi (c) Les Binns / Fox (c) Jon Hawkins / Goldcrest (c) David Longshaw



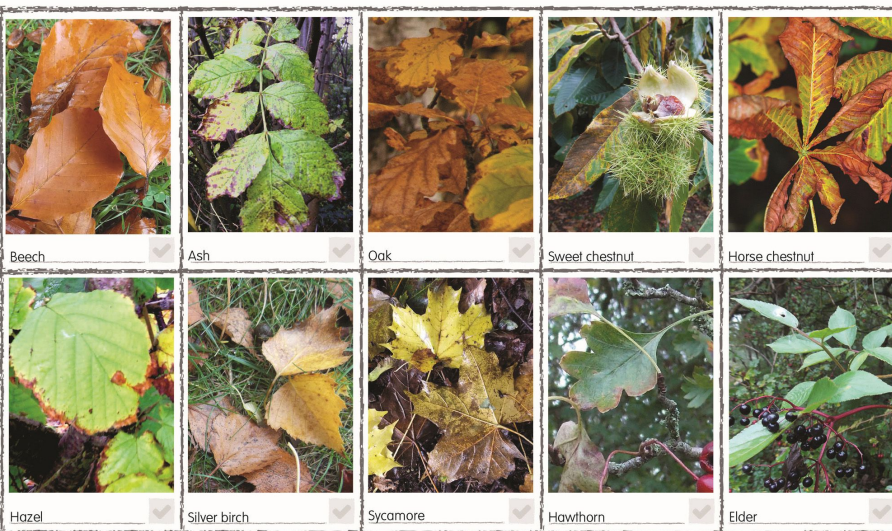
## Conifer woodland wildlife



[www.wildlifewatch.org.uk](http://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk)

Credits: Cool tit and Red deer (c) Elliott Neep / Adder (c) Jon Hawkins / Red squirrel, Siskin and Crossbill (c) Margaret Holland / Goldcrest (c) David Longshaw / Pine marten (c) Wildstock / Crested tit (c) Marthe de Jong-Lanlink / Capercaillie (c) Stefan Johansson

## Autumn tree and leaf detective



[www.wildlifewatch.org.uk](http://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk)

Credits: Horse Chestnut (c) Gillian Day / Oak (c) Paul Hobson / Beech, Ash, Sweet Chestnut, Silver Birch, Sycamore, Hawthorn, Elder, Hazel (c) Sadie McGlone

# Activities





# My street tree



Have you ever stopped to have a good look at your nearest garden or street trees? What sort are they? How old? Are they important for wildlife? Do birds roost or nest in them?

## You will need:

- Sheet of blank paper and clipboard
- Extra paper and crayons
- Magnifying glass or bug pot
- Minibeast ID chart or book
- Tape measure (optional)
- Leaf spotting sheet or other tree ID chart

1 Draw your tree in the middle of your paper. Use a leaf spotting sheet to help identify it.

2 Stick a fallen leaf on the paper, or do a rubbing using paper and crayons.

3 Use a magnifying glass, pot or poater to check out the minibeasts living on your tree.

4 How thick is its trunk? Can you measure it at chest height with a tape measure? Can you hug it?

5 Does your tree have plenty of healthy leaves and soil around its trunk?

6 What other wildlife is living in the tree? Put all your findings on your tree drawing.



www.wildlifewatch.org.uk

# Blow your own forest



## You will need

- Sponge
- Water-based paint
- Water
- Masking tape
- A long piece of paper
- Paper drinking straws
- Pipette

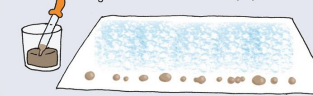
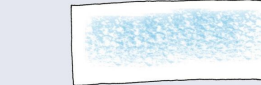
1 Use a sponge to dab watery blue or green paint over your piece of paper to create the background of sky or bushes.

2 Use masking tape to fix down the wet paper to stop it curling up.

3 Use a pipette (or a straw) to put small drops of runny black or brown paint along the bottom of the paper.

4 Aim a drinking straw at a blob of paint and blow hard to make it 'grow' up the paper into a tree shape. Neighbouring trees can overlap.

5 You can then stick on leaves or drawings to make a fuller scene.



Miniature versions of this can make good greetings cards.

www.wildlifewatch.org.uk

# How to make leaf skeletons



## You will need

- Leaves (choose ones with strong veins)
- Saucepan
- Bucket
- Soft brush
- Glue
- Newspaper
- Gold or silver spray paint (optional)

A leaf skeleton is made when the soft tissue of a leaf has crumbled or been eaten away, leaving behind the skeleton of veins.

1 Place your collected leaves in a saucepan with a litre of water. Bring to the boil and simmer for about 30 minutes.

2 Empty the pan into a bucket and let the leaves lie in the water for a couple of weeks. Make sure you have adult supervision, especially when boiling water.

3 Turn the leaves every couple of days. When the leaf tissue has softened, carefully remove the leaves from the bucket and gently rinse in cold water. Be warned! This can be smelly, so leave in a shed or garage. Cover the top if you leave it outside.

This takes a couple of weeks, so please be patient!

4 Use a soft brush to remove any remaining leaf material, leaving behind the skeleton (it will be brownish in colour).

5 Place on newspaper in a warm place to dry.

6 Flatten the leaf skeletons onto some paper, glue them into place. You can also spray them gold or silver and stick onto dark paper.

Top tip... They look great mounted on greetings cards or framed as a picture.

www.wildlifewatch.org.uk

# Pine cone creatures



## You will need

- Pinecones
- Craft foam, felt or card
- Scissors
- PVA glue and double-sided sticky tape
- Various things (as many natural as possible) to make your animal, such as:
  - Leaves
  - Acorn cups
  - Berries or googly eyes

1 Decide what animal you want to make. If you want it to stand, pick a pine cone that will stay upright and make and glue on the feet first.

2 Add legs or wings and eyes and ears using the materials you've collected.

Here are a few examples to get you inspired...



mouse



fox



owl

Acorn cups with berries or googly eyes in the centre make great eyes!

Always check what berries are before you pick them because some can be harmful to people!

www.wildlifewatch.org.uk



# Find your local woodland

We protect more than 30 nature reserves on your doorstep ranging from wildflower meadows to coastal dunes to ancient woodlands. Below are some of the best places to explore woodlands in our region.

 Find our nearest reserve  
[cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves](http://cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves)



# Stay connected

Cheshire Wildlife Trust is your region's leading conservation charity. We're fighting to bring wildlife back across Cheshire, Halton, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Warrington and Wirral.

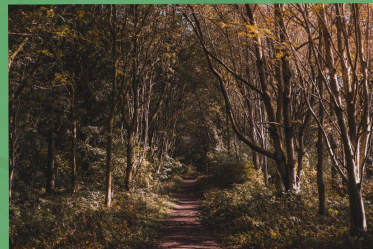
## Warburton's Wood, Kingsley



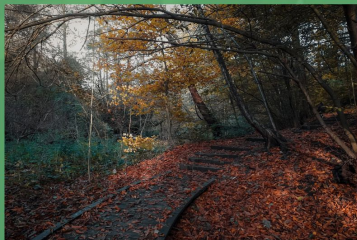
Warburton's Wood is an ancient woodland just outside Frodsham and blooms with over 50 species. To the north of the wood is grassland which runs down to the River Weaver.

## Swettenham Valley, Holmes Chapel

Swettenham Valley, near Holmes Chapel, is one of Cheshire's hidden gems. A mosaic of habitats including ancient woodland, a network of ponds and meadows which support an abundance of wildlife.







## Eastwood, Stalybridge



Eastwood is another hidden gem and one of our flagship reserves. A stunning clough woodland just outside Stalybridge with boardwalks and a tumbling brook.

As a member of Cheshire Wildlife Trust you'll receive our magazine, *Your WildLife*, in March and September. You'll also receive our weekly e-newsletter *Wild Cheshire*.

You can follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube for more WILD activities, tips, advice, what to look out for in nature and how Cheshire Wildlife Trust is working to bring wildlife back.

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 @cheshirewildlifetrust

As your local Wildlife Trust, we're here to keep you connected to the natural world we all cherish so much.

Thank you for your support!

[cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk](http://cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk)

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