

Woody Woodpecker's ideas for our BEETLES, BUGS, BEES & BUTTERFLIES topic

Mission 1: Get outside! - garden, pathway, side of a field, daily exercise walk.

Mission 2: Use your senses (not taste) to explore this area, who lives there or visits?

Mission 3: Share your findings with family, friends, me and school community.

Mission 4: Learn more about it and teach someone about it.

Mission 5: Make your space more wildlife friendly and keep visiting and appreciating nature throughout the year.

Where to look:

Under the ground, in the leaf litter, on tree bark, on tree leaves, in bushes, under rocks, amongst dead wood, in a bug hotel, under flower pots, corners of the shed or in the compost bin.

How to look:

Remember the creatures are small and delicate, be kind and careful with them and always return to where you found them. You could use a small pot (yogurt) or jar to put your creature in so you can get a good look and study/photograph or draw it. You can gently flick them into the pot with a clean, dry, paint brush or spoon, or [you could make a pooter](#).

Underground:

Do you have an area of the garden you can dig in? Maybe lay a piece of cardboard, a paving slab or old logs down on a bit of the garden for a few days or longer and then come back and have a look underneath. Or you could make a [pitfall trap](#) - always remember to return to it and return the creatures. If you have access to a compost bin or pile of leaves - have a good dig around and see what you can find. On your lawn you could try [worm charming](#).

You may find worms, snails, slugs, centipedes, millipedes, woodlouse, ants, beetles or larvae.

In the trees/bushes:

First of all, have a good look, you may spot webs or creatures in the cracks on the bark or caterpillars hanging from the tree. Then try laying an old white/light sheet/pillow case/towel under a bush or tree branch and then carefully shake the branch and the light fabric will show up any creatures that have fallen.

You may find spiders, beetles, shield bugs and caterpillars.

In the air:

One of the best ways of spotting flying bugs is to just sit or lay quietly in the garden, possibly near some flowers and just watch and listen. This works best on a sunny day you could spot butterflies, bees and ladybirds. Or lay on your tummy and look in amongst the grass to spot an ant and follow him on his journey. Or encourage them with food - write the word "ant" on paper using honey and leave outside and observe! You could try and spot some nocturnal flying creatures with a [light trap](#).

What did you find?

What did it look like? What colours is it? How many legs? Did it have wings? How did it move? Fast or slow?

Where did you find it? How do you think it is adapted to living in its habitat?

Do you know what it is? Can you identify it? What could help?

You could use books, apps, websites, [identification sheets](#) or ask a friend or family.

Record and share your findings:

Photographs, drawings, [nature journal](#) ([great list of things to include in a journal](#)) video - give us a tour of your garden become a TV wildlife presenter, tally chart, stories, poems, paintings, maths with bugs legs (spider + woodlouse = 22), [arts and crafts](#), [junk modelling](#) be inspired by the textile artist [Mr Finch](#).

Learn more and teach someone:

Choose your favorite creature and research more about them and then baffle others with your facts. Make a poster or a mini fact book or a 'Did you know video'. Can you teach me something new? I'd love for you to make a Did you know Book with all your findings for our school library when we return. Why not enter this [competition](#) with your work.

How could I make my patch of ground more wildlife friendly?

Think about the different habitats the different minibeasts use and try and encourage wildlife to your patch of outside space. You could make [large bug hotel](#), [small bug hotel](#), [bug mansion](#) [bird feeders](#), [bird bath](#), [butterfly/bee drink station](#), [wormery](#), [mini pond](#), [logger](#), plant flowers, [make a wild flower meadow](#), leave an area of grass uncut.

Loads of links and ideas online.

<http://treetoolsforschools.org.uk/activitymenu/?cat=helping>

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/encourage-wildlife-to-your-garden>

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/nine-ways-to-build-a-wildlife-friendly-garden>

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2019/04/minibeast-hunt/>

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-families/family-wild-challenge/activities/go-on-a-bug-safari/>

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/essexwildlifetrust/videos/>

There are some great wildlife resources on-line; webcams, zoo tours and even live safari. There are also some amazing wildlife programs on Iplayer and netflix. Try and watch films like Bugs Life, Turbo or Antz. What books have you got about bugs, beetles and butterflies and other wildlife, or see if you can find a youtube story telling or an audible copy. One of my favourites is A Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carl (I love his illustrations) or Tadpoles Promise by Jeanne Willis and for the older children see if you can read a copy of Beetle Boy.

I can't wait to see all your creative work on this topic. Have fun!

