

Supporting Our Wild Neighbours

Supplementary Resources for Primary Schools





Resource Pack

Biodiversity



Activity Idea:

Complete a Biodiversity audit in your school grounds (next page) and compare at the end of the topic.

Activity Idea:

In groups research a small mammal or insect using the internet or take a trip to the local library.

Make posters (either physical or digital) and display what you found!



Activity Idea:

Using your Biodiversity Audit- create a food chain that lives in your outdoor space.

Activity Idea:

Create a poem (it doesn't have to rhyme!) about a 'Wild Neighbour.'



Bio Diversity Audit

Date of survey: _____

Location: _____

Type (bird, minibeast, plant, other)	Species e.g. robin, worm, daisy, rabbit	How many seen



Identification Charts

Click on the pictures you want to view



Amazing Transformations by Metamorphosis

Insects totally transform the way they look a number of times during their lifetime. Take a look at some extraordinary insects and the amazing changes they go through.

Complete Metamorphosis
Many insects including bees, flies, ants, termites, bees and wasps go through 4 stages: Egg, Larva, Pupa and Adult. The pupa is a stage where the insect is changing form inside its shell.

Peacock Butterfly Lifecycle
Egg, Caterpillar, Chrysalis, Adult Butterfly

7-spot Ladybird Lifecycle
Egg, Larva, Pupa, Adult Ladybird

Incomplete Metamorphosis
Some insects including bees, flies, grasshoppers and crickets go through 3 stages: Egg, Nymph and Adult. The nymph is a young version of the insect and looks like a smaller version of the adult.

Green Shieldbug Lifecycle
Egg, 1st instar, 2nd instar, 3rd instar, 4th instar, 5th instar, Adult Green Shieldbug (in Summer)

MEET NATURE'S 'PEST' CONTROL EXPERTS

Many of our common insects love eating slugs, snails, aphids and caterpillars. Please care for these important creatures and try to avoid using garden pesticides which harm them.

Beetles & Bugs of Northern Ireland

How many species can you spot?

IVY

We are used to seeing ivy climbing up old walls, tree trunks and cascading the ground with its glossy, green leaves. Many people pull down ivy mistakenly thinking it's a parasitic plant, but in fact it doesn't damage the plant it creeps over. Ivy offers vital protection for roosting birds and hibernating insects. Its bright autumn flowers provide valuable food for a host of insects and its berries are food for hungry birds.

Let ivy flourish and watch it buzzing with insects in autumn!

DANDELIONS

The nectar and pollen of these cheerful native wildflowers are a vital food in early Spring for many insects.

Dandelions help to fertilise top-soil. Their deep roots bring nutrients to the surface, which helps shallow-rooted plants to thrive.

Dandelion leaves are delicious when added to salads and are stuffed full of iron, calcium and potassium. They contain more vitamin C than a tomato and more vitamin A than spinach.

Meet the Pollinators

Look at all the different local insects which pollinate flowers!

BRAMBLES

The thornier fruits of the bramble bush are loved by humans but also nibbled by many wild creatures. This plant's prickly stems give valuable protection for nesting birds and its flowers are food for many insects.

Next time you pass a bramble bush in flower, take a moment to notice how many insects are busily buzzing around it.

NETTLES

The stinging nettle may not be an eye-catching plant but it's a home and vital source of food for many insects.

The new leaves of nettles are delicious when made into soup, and nettle tea has been used as a traditional cure for arthritis, back pain, eczema, asthma, hay fever and muscle pain for hundreds of years.

Why not help wildlife and nurture a patch of this very useful plant?

MEET NATURE'S WASTE DISPOSAL EXPERTS

Do you know that an army of insects is busy cleaning and tidying; processing all kinds of waste, composting dead plants and fertilizing soil. The world would be in a real mess without them.

Please help nurture these vital creatures and avoid using chemical treatments which may harm them.

Activity Idea:

Print out a few charts and see if you can identify any insects in your outdoor space.



Communities Biodiversity Project

INSECTS & BIODIVERSITY



[CLICK HERE](#)



Communities Biodiversity Project

SMALL MAMMALS & BIODIVERSITY

CLICK HERE



Eco-Schools Biodiversity Resources

[CLICK HERE](#)



**KEEP
NORTHERN
IRELAND
BEAUTIFUL**



ECO-SCHOOLS

Twinkl have some fantastic resources and ideas! Click on the images to go to the resource on our website for FREE:

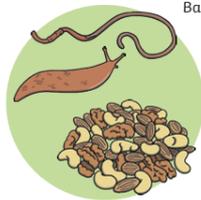


- sett
- tunnels
- worms
- food
- white
- fruit

Badgers are heavy mammals. They have black and _____ stripes on their head. Their bodies are covered in black and white fur and they have powerful short legs and clawed feet for digging.

Male badgers are called boars, females are called sows and their babies are called cubs. In Northern Ireland badgers live in setts with their family. A _____ is an underground burrow. Their burrows have long _____ with one large room for sleeping in.

Badgers are nocturnal. This means that they hunt for _____ at night and sleep during the day.



Badgers will eat almost anything but their favourite is _____. They use their sharp claws to find the worms hidden in the soil.

Badgers will also eat slugs, _____, nuts and small mice.

Make Your Own Fun Binoculars

What you need:

- Toilet roll tubes x 3
- Ribbon
- Split pins
- White Glue
- Paint
- Scissors



Eco-Schools Inspiration Biodiversity



All about Hedgehogs

Hedgehog facts

- The hedgehog is a member of the Order Insectivora.
- The insectivores are mainly small ground-dwelling mammals that feed upon invertebrates.
- The hedgehog is the most easily recognised of Irish mammals.
- Its body is covered with up to seven thousand protective spines, which it can raise in defence.
- It has small eyes and ears and a snout that is pointed and relatively mobile.
- Their teeth, like most insectivores, are sharp, for piercing and crushing hard bodied prey.
- It is not clear when and how the hedgehog reached Ireland but the earliest record is from the mid 13th century in Waterford city.

What do they feed on?

Hedgehogs will eat almost any invertebrate, but they will also take eggs, small mammals and carrion. There is no detailed information on the composition of the diet in Ireland but a study in Britain indicated that about half the diet consists of beetles and caterpillars.

NIEA Northern Ireland Environment Agency



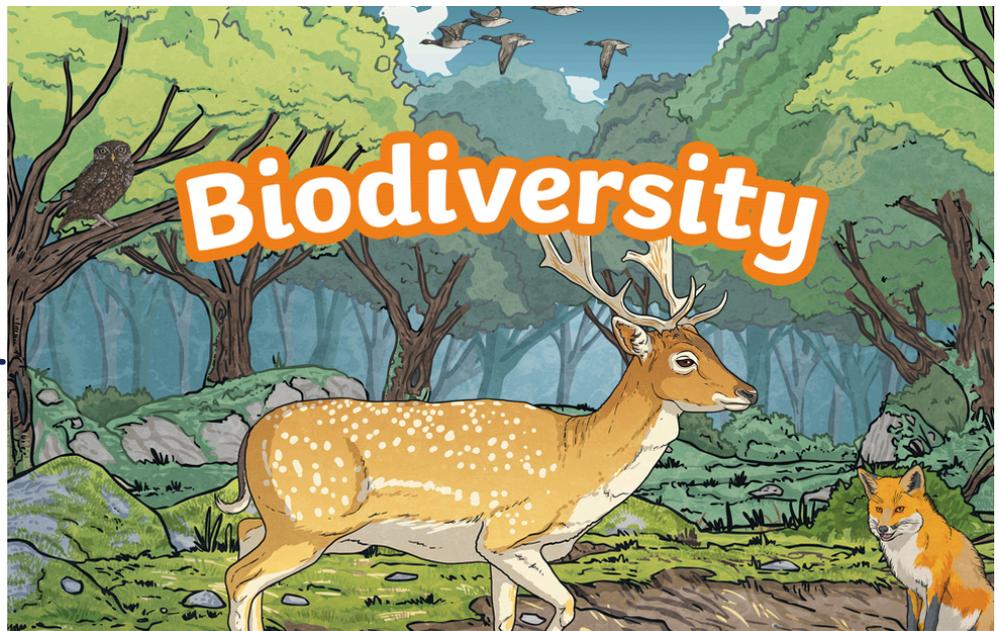
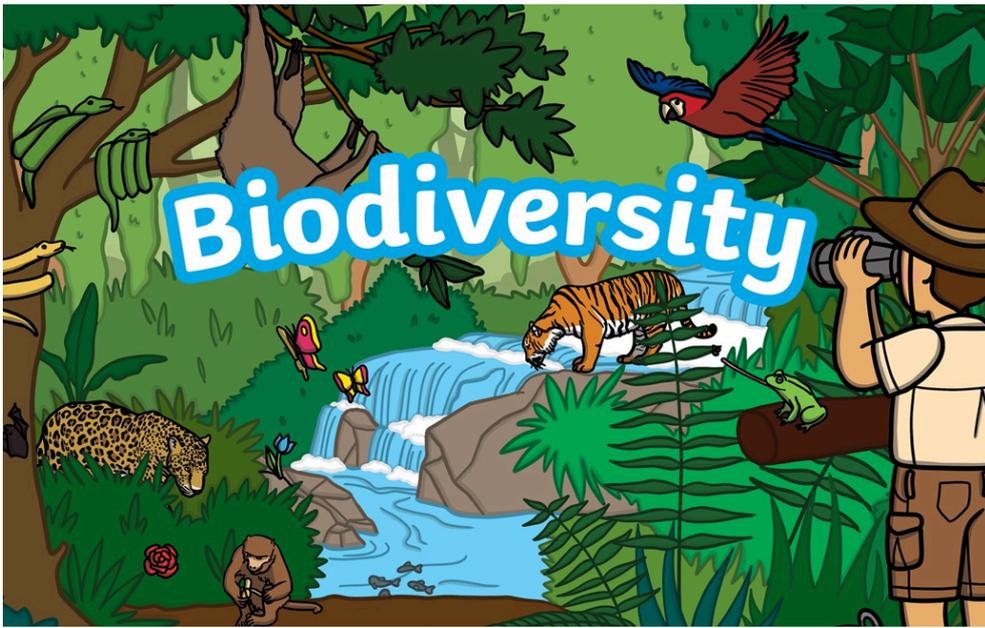
Here are some ready made PowerPoint presentations around Biodiversity!



BIODIVERSITY

KEY STAGE 1





Habitat, Plant and Pollinator Guide



All About Hedgehogs



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Activity Idea:

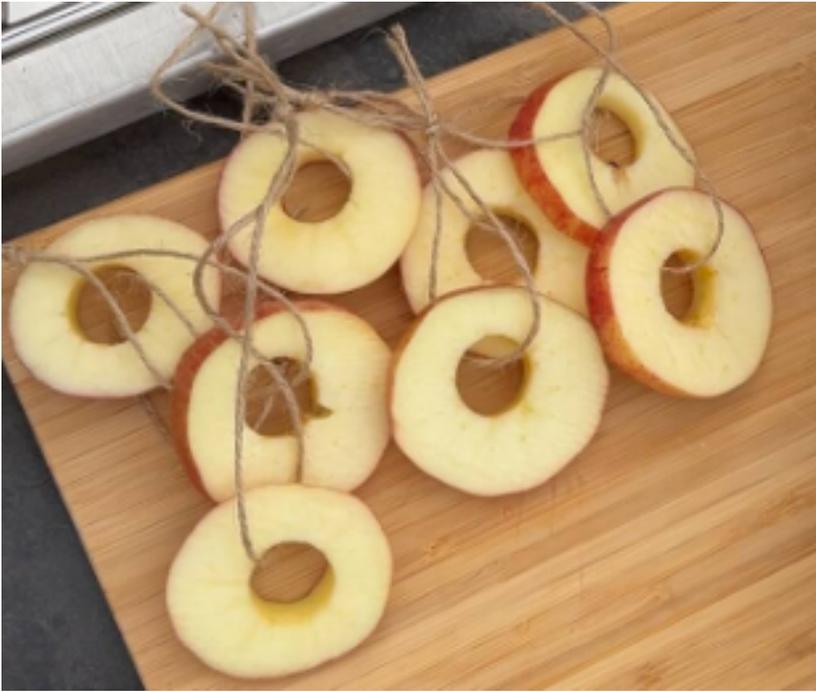
Biodiversity sorting activity



Resource Pack

Local Birds





Activity Idea:

**Create an easy bird feeder and hang around your school grounds.
Core and slice an apple, loop a string hook, push in seeds (sunflower, pumpkin etc).**



Activity Idea:

**Register for the Big Schools' Birdwatch 2025
Click on the RSPBNI logo to see more details.**



**NORTHERN
IRELAND**

Activity Idea:

**Start a bird watching club. Research local bird
watching groups and see if they can come in and
do a workshop.**

Activity Idea:

Take pictures of birds - Use BirdSpot.co.uk online interactive website to identify which birds you spotted!



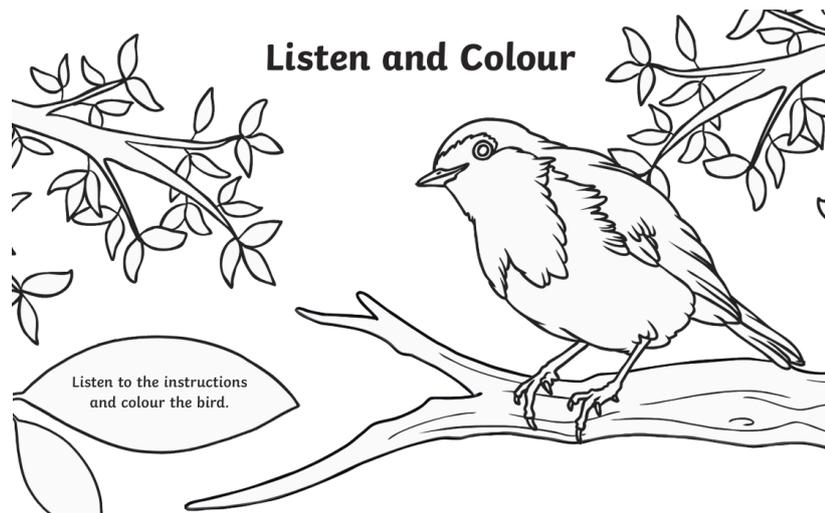
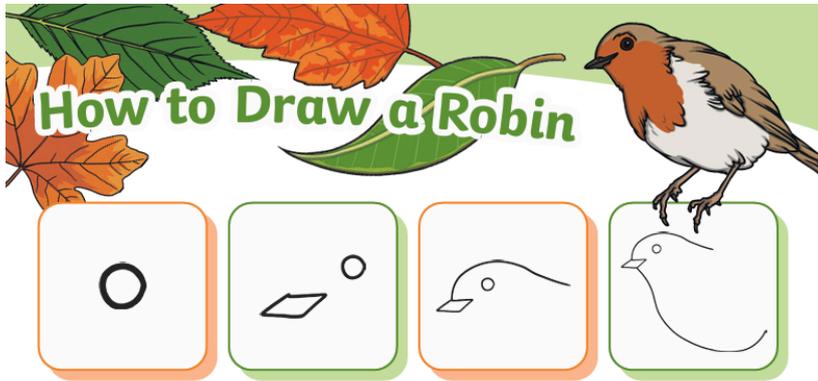
Click on the bird to take you to the BirdSpot website

10 Common Birds in Ireland

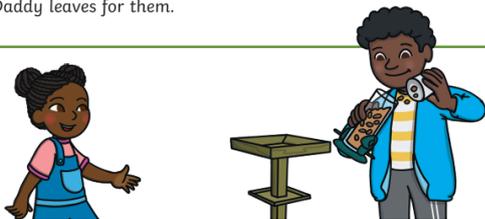
 Magpie	 Robin	 Blackbird	 Chaffinch	 Great Tit
 Coal Tit	 Wood Pigeon	 Song Thrush	 House Sparrow	 Starling



Twinkl have some fantastic resources and ideas!
Click on the images to go to the resource on our
website for FREE:



It is _____. Every morning before Sam and Poppy have their breakfast, they like to feed the birds in their garden. Their daddy decided to put a bird _____ station in their garden. Sam's favourite bird is a robin and Poppy's favourite bird is a _____ tit. The robin likes to eat the seeds from the bird feeder and the blue tit likes to eat some of the _____ balls that Daddy leaves for them.





Resource Pack

Pollinators & Minibeasts



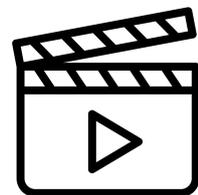
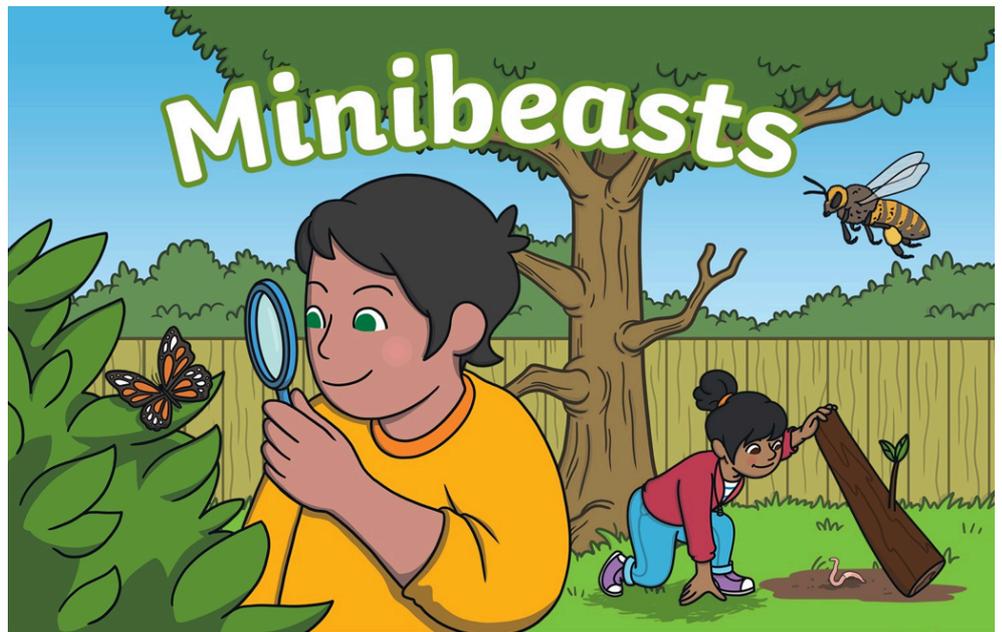
Dice and Draw Bumblebee

Rules:

- Play with a partner. Take it in turns to roll the dice.
- Each time you roll a new number, draw that part of the bee.
- If you roll a number you have had before, you must wait until your next turn to try again.
- Each person must roll a 6 to begin.
- The first person to draw their bumblebee is the winner.



Minibeasts



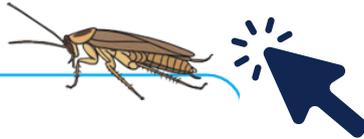


Bug Hunt

Can you find these bugs and insects?

spider 	centipede 	worm 	beetle
ladybird 	snail 	ant 	caterpillar

Draw what you found.



Minibeasts

n i o x e e m u w b o d y t
i n q p d r d d m a w i g z
q s v t o o j n u u s g b t
b e t w h a i y a l z p u m
e c v r m i n i b e a s t g
e t r y g y z t w l f p t t
t n q s m z q h e a b k e f
l a v d p t n e m d k l r d
e h y g b i p a o y r h f v
z h a b l b d d t b z s l d
c p w y b u s e h i f u y d
i o k t e g j u r r l i y b
b a w d e e f v h d y q e t
i r d l w r l v s y k j j e

ant	fly	wasp
bee	insect	worm
beetle	legs	head
body	minibeast	ladybird
butterfly	moth	spider

Minibeasts

Choose a minibeast and research as much information as you can.

What do they eat?

Are they endangered?

Why are they important to the environment?

If they disappeared what would happen?

Communities Biodiversity Project

INSECTS & BIODIVERSITY



CLICK HERE



MINIBEASTS

Choose a minibeast and research as much information as you can

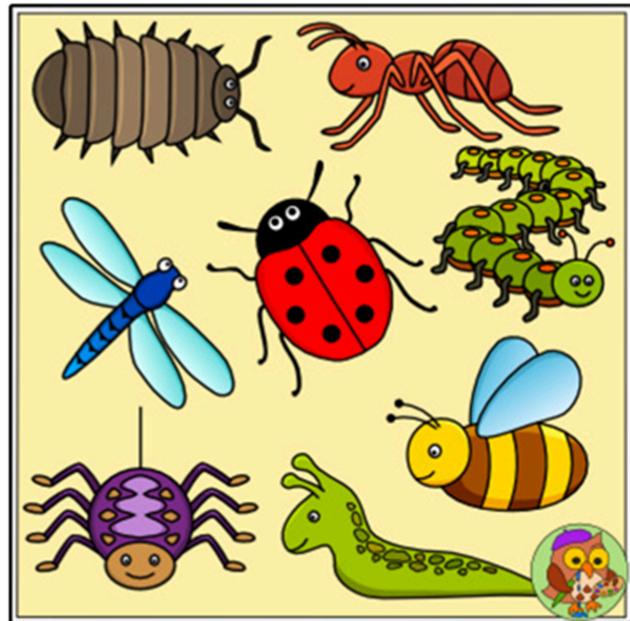
Where do they live?

What do they eat?

Are they endangered?

Why are they important to the environment?

If they disappeared what would happen?



Activity Idea:

Research a minibeast online or take a trip to the local library and borrow books about different minibeasts.

Activity Idea:

Create your own bee hotel
(see a guide on next 4 pages)

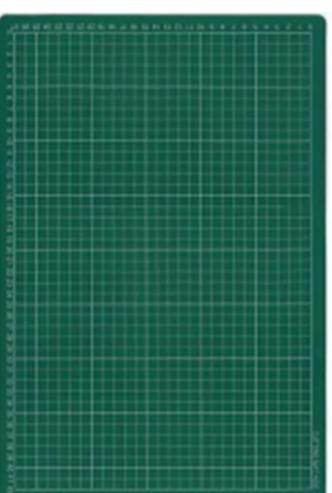
What you'll need

There are lots of ways to make a bee hotel. Holes drilled into untreated wood is one way. Some are more sophisticated, but here's a very simple method using an old plastic bottle (or length of water pipe) stuffed with lengths of twigs and hollow stems.

Collect nesting materials such as lengths of bamboo, hollow plant stems, bunches of dried twigs and grasses. Different species of wild solitary bee need holes from 2 to 10 mm, so aim for a range of diameters. Make sure your materials are dry before starting.

You'll also need:

- 2 litre used plastic bottle (or length of water pipe)
- Sandpaper
- Craft knife and cutting mat
- Strong twine, about 1 metre long
- Garden clippers or secateurs
- Modelling clay (optional)



Bee hotel design: a step-by-step guide

1. With a craft knife, cut both ends off the plastic bottle to create a cylinder. If using a length of water pipe to create the cylinder, sand the edges smooth.
2. Solitary bees go deep inside the hollow stems or bamboo canes, so use lengths of at least 100mm, ideally 150mm.
3. To keep the stems and canes dry from rain, make them 3 cm shorter than the cylinder – use sharp garden clippers to trim them. Bees can't burrow through the knots in bamboo, so avoid canes with too many knots.
4. Use sandpaper to smooth the ends of the bamboo or stems if uneven. Bees will be put off by sharp edges barring entry to the holes. Splinters on the inside edges of stems can also cut their wings.
5. Use modelling clay or wax to block the rear of completely hollow canes – and to help secure the stems and bamboo in place. Bind the bunched stems and canes with twine.
6. Before filling the cylinder, thread a length of twine through, so you can hang up the finished hotel, making sure it's secure and can't be blown about in the wind.
7. If needed, pack in more hollow stems, bamboo, twigs and reeds until the cylinder is tightly packed and secure.



Where to put a bee hotel

In full sun, facing south or south east.

Locate your bee hotel at least a metre off the ground, with no vegetation blocking the entrance. Keep it dry at all times, to prevent the contents going mouldy.

Secure it firmly to a wall, fence or free-standing post while in use.

As this is a temporary design, you'll need to move your bee hotel in the autumn and winter to protect the bee eggs inside.

You can move it into a garden shed or similar. Basically, somewhere dry and unheated. Do this from October to February, and then put it outside again in March.

Then, after the new generation of solitary bees has emerged (you'll see if they've made their way out of the hollow stems in the springtime as any mud covering the hollows will be opened up), you can replace the stems with fresh materials for a new year. You can even try a more permanent design to attract more solitary bees.



Don't forget food and water

Healthy bees need a balanced diet from different types of plants across the seasons, some of which will provide nectar or pollen, or both.

You can create a **wildflower patch** with lots of goodies that flower at different times of the year. Even if you don't have much of a garden, you can still feed bees from a window box of herbs.

And bees need water too – preferably rainwater. Solitary mason bees also seek mud for their nest building.

Find out more about the **best flowers to plant** and how to **provide a safe drinking place** for bees.





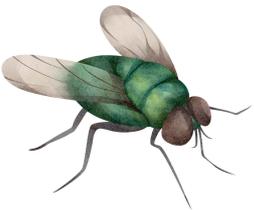
SHIELDBUG IDENTIFICATION: 10 COMMON UK SHIELDBUGS



TYPES OF BEE IN THE UK: HOW TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE



Woodland Trust have great information around minibeasts - why not look at these identification articles



INSECT IDENTIFICATION: COMMON UK INSECTS



UK HAWK-MOTH IDENTIFICATION AND FACTS



Activity Idea:

Identify bees in your local area

Tree bumblebee

Habitat: open woodland, parks, gardens.

Favourite plants: comfrey, bramble, fruit trees, fuchsia.

When to see: March–July.





Common carder bee

Habitat: woodlands, gardens, heathland, parks

Favourite plants: bluebell, clover, knapweed, scabious, comfrey, dandelion.

When to see: March–November.



Honey bee

Habitat: woodlands, gardens, parks, orchards, meadows.

Favourite plants: willow, ivy, lavender, dandelion, clover, thyme.

When to see: March–September.

Red mason bee

Habitat: gardens, parks, orchards, urban environments.

Favourite plants: apple, pear, dandelion, willow

When to see: April–June.





Tawny mining bee

Habitat: gardens, parks, south-facing embankments.

Favourite plants: buttercup, dandelion, hawthorn, blackthorn, willow, fruit trees.

When to see: March–June.



Resource Pack

Gardening



Fruit juice carton seed trays



Equipment

- An empty 1 litre fruit juice or milk carton
- Marker pen
- Scissors
- Peat-free compost
- Seeds - lettuce, rocket or soft herbs such as chives, coriander or basil, as easy starters
- Recycled or reusable clear plastic bag
- Watering can

Hints and tips

- For safety, adult support will be needed when making the initial cut into the carton
- Use the cut panel as a plant label
- Use a permanent marker or chalk pen to write the label with so that the writing doesn't wash off
- Slip the seed packet into the end of the carton to remind you of the growing instructions

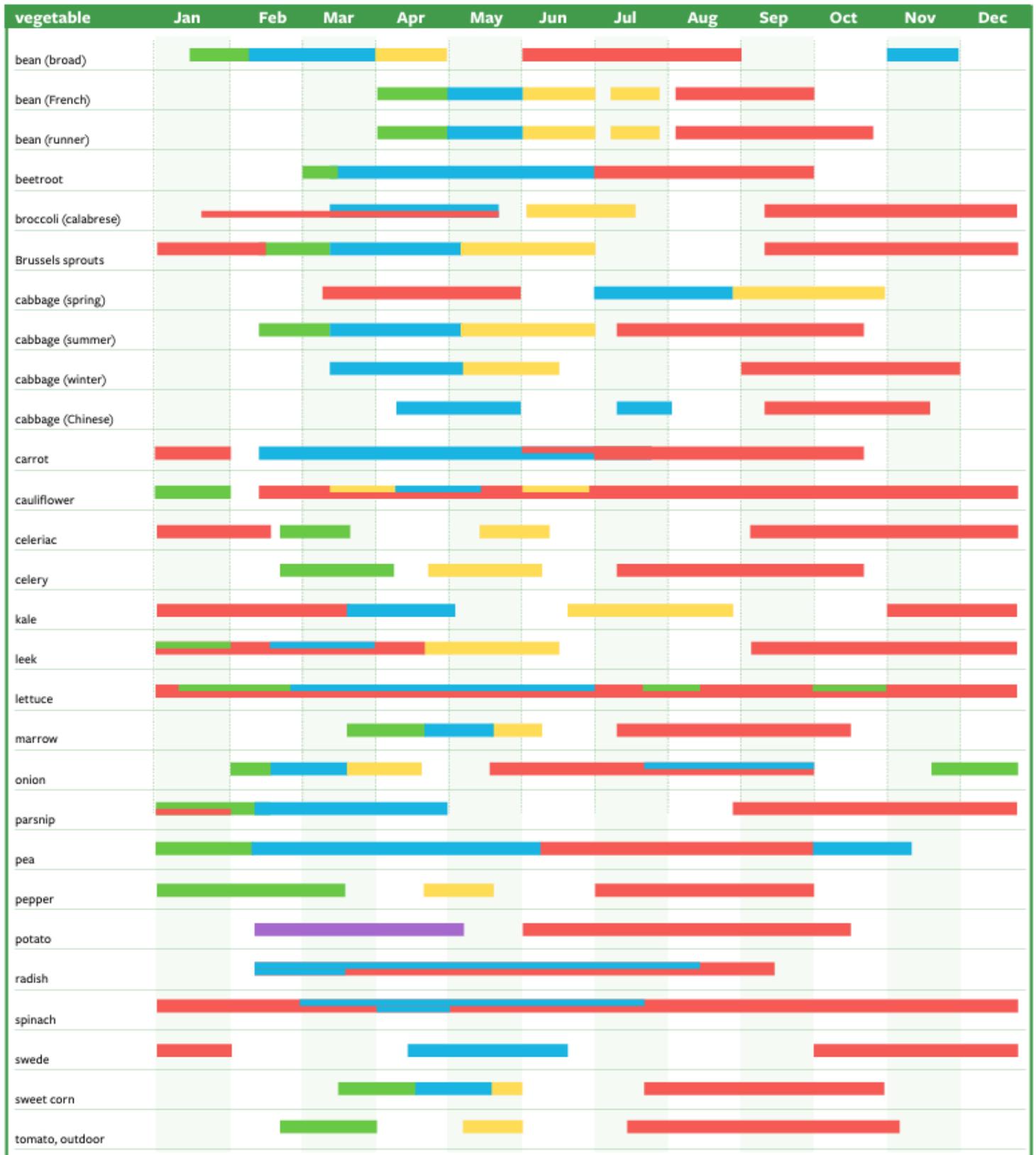
Step by step

1. Place the carton on its side. Using the marker pen, draw a rectangle along the side panel of the carton, leaving a small border around each side
2. Cut out the rectangle with the scissors and put the cut panel to one side to use as a label
3. Fill the carton with peat-free compost, making sure that the surface of the compost is flat. If you are using small seeds, water the soil before sowing to prevent the water from moving the seeds around. If sowing larger seeds, you can water after sowing
4. Sow seeds onto the surface of the compost and cover them with a thin layer of compost
5. If sowing larger seeds, water now, ensuring the compost is wet
6. Cover the carton with a recycled or reusable clear plastic bag. This aids germination, helping the seed to grow, and reduces water loss through evaporation
7. Place the carton in a warm sunny spot such as a windowsill or in a greenhouse until the seeds have germinated. You can then prick out the seedlings to grow on



Your download and keep crop planner

rhs.org.uk - To exit full screen, press **Esc**



Key
 ■ sowing indoors ■ sowing outdoors ■ planting tubers, sets or offsets ■ planting out seedlings ■ harvesting



[Click here to go to the RHS website](#)

Additional Resources



[15 Native Flowers](#)



Crop Calendar – Sowing Schedule

Use this handy calendar to check when to sow the seeds for different fruits, vegetables and herbs on your allotment.

Month	Vegetables	Fruit
January	Onions, Leeks, Peas, Garlic, Broad Beans	Apples, Pears, Gooseberries, Blackberries, Blueberries, Cherries, Peaches, Nectarines, Rhubarb
February	Onions, Leeks, Spinach, Lettuce, Brussels Sprouts, Garlic, Peas, Broad Beans, Potatoes (First Early)	Apples, Pears, Gooseberries, Blackberries, Blueberries, Cherries, Peaches, Nectarines, Rhubarb, Tomatoes
March	Brussels Sprouts, Cabbages, Lettuces, Broad Beans, Beetroot, Carrots, Leeks, Onions, Peas, Spinach, Spring Onions, Potatoes (Second Early and Maincrop)	Apples, Pears, Gooseberries, Blackberries, Blueberries, Cherries, Peaches, Nectarines, Strawberries, Raspberries, Tomatoes
April	Pumpkins, Runner Beans, Beetroot, Lettuces, Broad Beans, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbages, Carrots, Onions, Peas, Spinach, Spring Onions, Herbs, Potatoes (Maincrop)	Tomatoes
May	Pumpkins, Runner Beans, Beetroot, Lettuces, Cabbages, Carrots, Courgettes, Peas, Spinach, Spring Onions, Herbs, Potatoes (Second Early and Maincrop)	Melons
June	Beetroot, Carrots, Courgettes, Peas, Pumpkins, Runner Beans, Lettuces, Spring Onions	-
July	Beetroot, Cabbages, Carrots, Peas, Lettuces, Spring Onions,	-
August	Cabbages, Carrots, Onions, Spinach, Lettuces, Spring Onions	Strawberries
September	Spinach, Lettuces, Spring Onions, Cabbages, Onions	Cranberries, Nectarines, Peaches, Strawberries
October	Broad Beans, Peas, Cabbages, Garlic, Onions	Rhubarb, Gooseberries, Grape Vines, Nectarines, Peaches, Strawberries
November	Broad Beans, Garlic	Apples, Apricots, Blackberries, Blueberries, Cherries, Cranberries, Gooseberries, Grape Vines, Nectarines, Peaches, Pears, Raspberries
December	Broad Beans, Garlic	Apples, Apricots, Blackberries, Blueberries, Cherries, Gooseberries, Nectarines, Peaches, Pears, Raspberries, Rhubarb
Key: Blue - Indoors, Green - Outdoors		