

Outdoor Learning

Autumn Newsletter 2022

Issue 1



NATURE NOTES

DEER LEGS, DEAD SNAKES, BABY NEWTS, HORNBEAM LEAVES, FUNGUS FORAYS and LOADS OF APPLES

It truly is the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness as our grounds are full of signs that Autumn has arrived and our plants, animals and fungi prepare for the colder months ahead. The hornbeam tree next to the pond is busy shedding its leaves and the damp weather has encouraged many species of fungus to appear. Biodiversity at Bowhill continues to amaze us and as well as the usual wood pigeons, squirrels and newts we have also seen evidence that our foxes are still around with a scavenged deer leg and a chewed up grass snake. What next I wonder?!

1

LEAVES

Collect as many different leaves as you can from our many species of trees

2

BIRDS

Clean and fill up bird feeders as our feathered buddies need to fatten up for Winter

3

LOG PILES

Leave piles of logs and sticks for hedgehogs, slow worms and mini beasts to shelter



Remarkable reptiles

As well as slow worms (actually a kind of legless lizard) we appear to have grass snakes in our grounds too.



Pond life

Our incredible pond is like a miniature ocean. It is home to amphibians, molluscs worms, crustaceans and much more.



The Willows

The place we call The willows is really a stand of about 30 silver birch trees. *The Birches* anyone?

WELLY WEDNESDAY

Picking apples for pressing; pond dipping; collecting leaves for composting; hot chocolate and bickies

Children who are chosen as the Outstanding Learner in their class join Mr Mawdsley and other nature nerds for Welly Wednesday. Taking over from Mrs Dack, Ms Chanter helps with the younger children and so far this term we have enjoyed several lovely afternoons in the Autumn sunshine getting to know our outdoor areas. We also aim to make new friends and improve our health by having memorable encounters with the natural world.

‘Wow! That newt is beautiful. Look at its orange belly!’

Every afternoon is a bit different but we always end with a drink and a biscuit. Having some quiet time to reflect on the experience is a positive way to end our



sessions. Sitting on logs under the hornbeam tree is a great way to be thankful for the natural world and its part in our lives at school.

To work up an appetite this term, we have gathered apples for Ms Shields to press for juice; gathered leaves, banana peels and apple cores (and guinea pig poo!) to make compost; and looked closely at the thousands of creatures that live in our pond including leeches, water beetles and dragonfly larvae.

When will it be your turn for Welly Wednesday?

WILDLIFE CHAMPIONS

A small team of Year 4/5 children are currently working with Emily from Devon Wildlife Trust in a project called Wildlife Champions. She helps the children to find ways to make our amazing school grounds even more attractive to living things. Their focus this year is on insects particularly butterflies and moths. To make our school an even more welcoming place the team will aim to do the following: planting nectar-rich shrubs, sowing seeds of as many types of wildflowers as they can, making bug hotels so that insects can shelter during the colder months and recording the species that live here so that other children can become aware of the incredible biodiversity at Bowhill.

