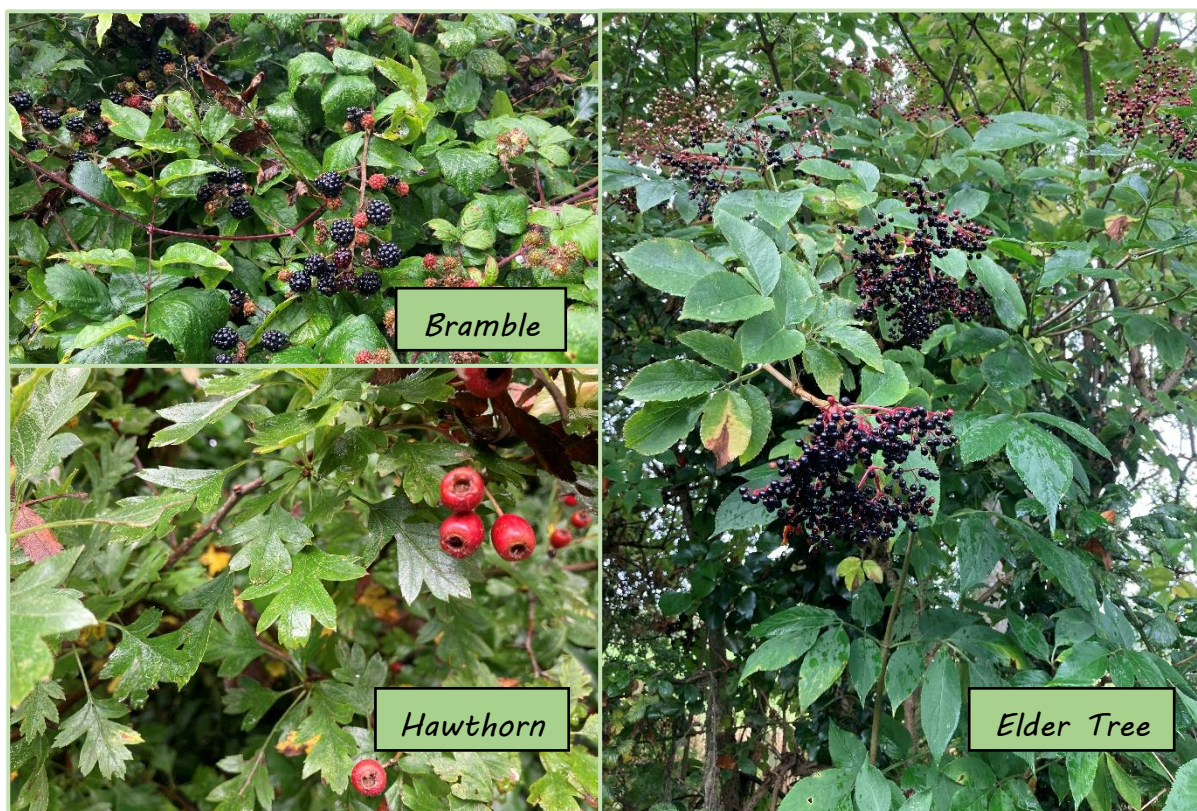


September – Hedges, Fruits and Seeds

This is a time of year where we see an abundance of wild food in the countryside. Most of our plants in Ireland have taken advantage of the additional energy from the long days, warmer conditions and sunshine throughout the summer months and are now laden down with fruits or nuts and seeds; which have developed from the blossoms of Spring. Many of the fruits, berries, nuts and seeds that are found on flowering plants, shrubs and trees at this time of year are a great food source for wild animals; this is one of the reasons hedgerows are a vital landscape feature for biodiversity in Ireland.



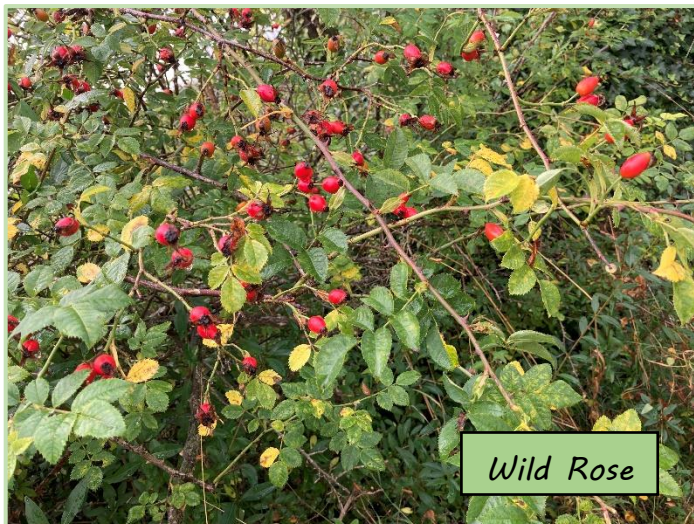
Here are a few images of some of the most obvious fruiting plants to be found in hedges at this time of year. Some of the most recognizable species to be looking out for at this time of year include Hawthorn, Elder, Wild Rose, Blackthorn, Mountain Ash, Crab Apple and Bramble amongst others.

Activity Idea - Habitat Mapping

The fruits and nuts on most plants are distinctive and can be used as a tool in identifying the plants themselves. Taking notice of the fruits at this time of year is a good idea especially if you are in the process of logging the biodiversity that is present on your school campus, and for schools creating Habitat Maps, as part of the 'Environmental Review- Step 2' on the Biodiversity Theme.

Activity Idea - Notice Nature

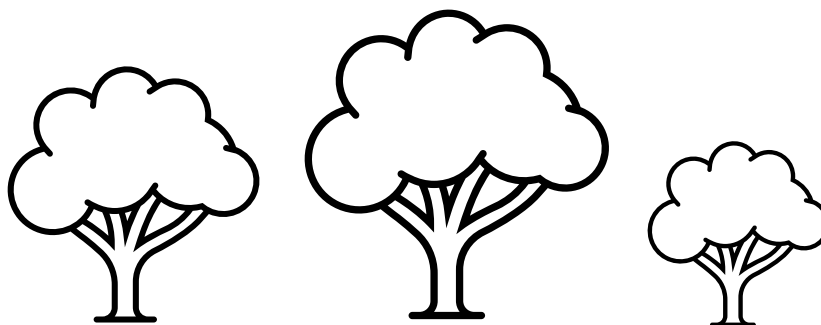
A simple activity to explore the subject of hedges is a nature walk on the school grounds or in your local area; this activity can usually be carried out with relative ease, wherever you find old hedges along school boundaries, next to paths or in local green spaces. Using the images, take a trip outside and see if these or other plants are growing close to you.



Keep a record of what you find, and take photographs to help you identify what's there; comparing and contrasting your findings with plants on the following websites will help with your observations www.treecouncil.ie/native-irish-trees , www.wildflowersofireland.net or www.irishwildflowers.ie.

Action Idea: Grow your own Trees by Harvesting Fruit and Seeds

Tree-planting is an incredibly powerful way to combat the Climate Crisis and Biodiversity Emergency. Taking such action also helps students and teachers to engage with, contribute to and be a part of, a brighter and sustainable future. For example you can harvest seeds from the Hawthorn by mashing up the berries and planting them in sand with compost (see this page [here](#) for some harvest and planting guidance). Crab Apple is another straight-forward example; the seeds are easy to access in the core of the apple, and just need to be popped into a pot of compost and covered with a thin layer of grit. A simple search online will give you plenty of information on how to plant different seeds. You could potentially grow hundreds of trees, that can be replanted, gifted, or used locally to fill gaps in hedges in the coming years. Most young trees will be happy enough in pots for a couple of years (once they have enough water in dry spells). Imagine the class and school-wide learning from such an activity.



Best of luck with you action!