



Plant Biodiversity Starter Pack for Primary Schools

Try these activities and resources to get started investigating habitats and plants in your school or local area.

“Getting Outdoors” Activities

Before you go out

- Watch the Green Schools Introduction to Biodiversity [Video](#). Look through the RSPB [Habitat guide](#) and think about what types are near your school. What kind of smaller habitats like hedgerows, log piles, areas of grass are in your grounds?
- Split students into groups and give each of them this [Cloud Spotter Sheet](#) from Lets go Britain. Look at the differences between clouds before you go out.
- Talk about beginning to notice what is around you when you are outside.

You will need

- Cloud Spotter sheets.
- Camera/phone/ipad.
- Paper and pencil per student

Completing the activities

- Go on a walk around your school grounds, local park, woodland etc and encourage students to focus on observing their surroundings. Note the habitats (big or small) you see. Take pictures or sketch anything interesting you spot.
- Look at the different types of clouds in the sky. Use the spotter sheets to help work out what kind they are.
- Use your ears to notice what is around you. Try our [Sound Mapping Activity](#) and ask each student to pick a space to sit quietly and draw all the sounds they can hear.

Follow on activities

- Create a [habitat map](#) for your school. Add in any of the habitats you found.
- Use the skills you have gained on how to notice your surroundings to carry out bird, plant or insect spotting activities.

Tree Investigation Activities

Before you go out..

- Watch this [Interactive Talk](#) to give you some background on Ireland's native trees and this [Demonstration Video](#) on finding the oldest and tallest trees on your grounds.
- Look through the [Green Schools Guide to Native Trees](#) to learn about some of our more common native trees.
- Decide where you will go outside to explore trees. Are there many on your grounds or is there a local park you can explore? Think about the time of year it is and whether they will have leaves, flowers, seeds etc.

Follow on Actions

- Try to identify any trees you couldn't when outside.
- Add information on tree species, age/height to your school habitat map if you have one.
- Ask staff members/ parents who were former students if they remember very old trees being planted.
- Look at the same trees at other times of the year. Note their changes. Make a tree trail with around your school.

Completing the activities.

- Split students into groups and give each the [LEAF Tree Identification Sheet](#) for them to work through outside.
- Go on a walk around your school grounds or local area and try to identify as many trees as possible. Photograph or sketch their key characteristics. Note what helped you to identify them.
- Give each group the age and height of a Tree Activity [Sheet](#). Guess which tree you think will be the oldest. Allow each group to attempt each activity on a different tree. Record your findings.

You will need

- Spotter sheets. Use one above or [flower](#) or [leaves](#) id sheets.
- Camera/phone/ipad.
- Paper and pencil
- To find the oldest or tallest tree you will need a measuring tape/string and a rule and this [Sheet](#).

Grassland Plants - Hula Hoop Toss

Before you start

- Look at some pictures of grassland plants online so you are familiar with their features. Talk about how other plants can grow in grassy areas.
- Decide where you will go. Do you have a playing pitch or grass verges on your school grounds? Talk about whether you would expect there to be lots of different plants growing or just grass. Do you think there will be a difference between a playing pitch and a wilder area?
- Divide students into groups and print out spotter sheet on next page or some from our additional links and give one to each group along with a hula hoop or quadrat.

Completing the activity

- Each group should throw their hula hoop/quadrat so that it lands at random on a patch of grass you are investigating.
- The group should then closely examine everything inside the hoop. Count how many different plants you can see.
- Try to identify, photograph or draw each different plant. Throw again in the same area and notice whether you are finding the same or different plants. Which are the most common?
- Move to a different area and repeat. Notice the different plants or different numbers of plants in areas like closely cut grass versus areas with long grass.

Follow on activities

- If there were plants you could not identify outside try again back in the classroom by checking the following:
 - For an in depth look try the [Wildflowers of Ireland](#)
 - Or search by colour on the [Irish Wildflowers](#) website
- Pick an area of grass you will leave uncut. Notice how long it takes for other plants to begin to grow there.

You will need

- Hula Hoop/Quadrat
- Spotter sheet below and the [April/May/June](#) Spotter Sheet from LEAF. You can search for all months [here](#).
- Camera/phone/ipad
- Paper and pencil

Green Schools Grassland Spotter Sheet

Tick every time you see me!



Daisy/Nóinín



Buttercup/Fearbán



Dandelion/Caisearbhán



Forget me not/Lus míonla goirt



Cleavers (sticky back)/Garbhluas



Nettles/Neantóg



Dock Leaves/Duilleog chopóige



Creeping Thistle/Feochadán
Reachta