

Early Years

Project: Wildlife in the garden throughout the year

The children were introduced to the 'Forest area' and were keen to explore immediately. They went off, reassuring each other and demonstrating how to climb under and over branches, working together as a team.

When they came back to me they asked many questions!



First steps:

Address the issue of what lives in the area and how the children can discover this for themselves.

The children were given binoculars, gardening forks and leaflets. It was time for them to explore and to be active learners!

		<p>Fox</p> <p>The 'fox' is a clever hunter and scavenger which mean that it can live in country/low or in town's farms, noticed by the people who also live there.</p> <p>Diet: it will eat anything from earthworms, berries, mice, rabbits and pheasants, to chickens and restaurant left-overs.</p> <p>Length:30cm, toes: 50cm tall</p> <p>Weight: 14kg</p>
		<p>Badger</p> <p>In the past badgers were known as Broek (sometimes written as bog, or as the Celtic bog). People and places associated 'broek' in their name have at least some connection with badgers of old.</p> <p>Diet: worms are its main food, but it also eats insects and small mammals and will break into a bees' nest for honey.</p> <p>Length:30cm</p> <p>Weight: 13kg</p>
		<p>Grey Squirrel</p> <p>Grey squirrels were brought to this country as pets from America. Escaped pets thrived and became more successful than the native red squirrels.</p> <p>Diet: hazel nuts, acorns, beeches (which its stores for winter use), but it also eats birds eggs and younglings in the nest and will steal food from bird feeders.</p> <p>Length: 30cm including tail</p> <p>Weight: 600g</p>

		<p>Kestrel</p> <p>A bird of prey. Part of the family that includes eagles, buzzards, and hawks.</p> <p>Diet: small mammals such as mice, voles, shrews, young hares and rabbits.</p> <p>Length: 60 to 70 cm</p> <p>Wingspan: 175-178cm</p> <p>Weight: 80-1,200g</p>
		<p>Green Woodpecker</p> <p>They have a 'housetop' which has a red centre in males but is all black in females. It is a shy bird but usually draws attention with its loud chattering.</p> <p>(Professor Satchell, the woodpecker, in Bognor).</p> <p>Diet: ants</p> <p>Length: 30-35cm</p> <p>Wingspan: 80-81 cm</p> <p>Weight: 100-220g</p>
		<p>Magpie</p> <p>The average lifespan of magpies is five years. The oldest recorded was 21 years, 3 months, and 23 days old when it died in 1947.</p> <p>http://www.birds-internom.aggie.net</p> <p>Diet: Omnivorous. Invertebrates, carrion, birds eggs, young birds & mammals, domestic food waste, fruit, seeds.</p> <p>Length:30cm</p> <p>Wingspan:33cm</p> <p>Weight: 240g</p>

		<p>Slug</p> <p>Research suggests that the average UK garden has over 30,000 slugs and snails.</p> <p>Diet: leaves, plants and/or carrion, other slugs, snails and worms.</p> <p>Length:30cm</p> <p>Weight:300mg</p>
		<p>Longest earthworm found in Britain</p> <p>was 15.75 inches long and weighed as much as a small chocolate bar.</p> <p>National Geographic</p> <p>Diet: live and dead vegetation</p> <p>Length: 30cm</p> <p>Weight: 10g</p>
		<p>Small snail</p> <p>A snail can be seen 2 miles from a garden and still find its way back!</p> <p>The Natural History of the British Isles - M & P Briggs</p> <p>Diet: vegetation</p> <p>Length: 35mm and weighs 35mm</p> <p>Weight:25-45g</p>

The children found holes in the earth and were keen to know if they were fox or badger homes. They were delighted to find different types of insects and had great fun and a huge learning curve when using the gardening fork. They lifted stones and logs and were amazed at the number and types of insects they found. Then a robin came and landed on the newly turned over soil and began to eat the worms we had found!



The children had more questions.

Why aren't there any bees?

Does the robin have a nest? Where is it then?
Can we make a nest?

Do all birds eat worms?

What if there's no worms? Will the robin die?

Immediately this took us to the importance of life cycles. I introduced the importance of natural decay to promote wildlife from the soil level to the tree top levels. The children were eager to share their opinions on how we might maintain our natural areas and encourage the growth of plants to promote wildlife.

The children returned to the area we had been exploring. They replaced the logs, searched for berries and remembered to leave them on the bushes for the robin! They decided to make 'shelters' for small animals and decided where they would like to make a 'bug hotel'.



Next steps:

- Re visit the area and encourage the children to search for new signs of life in the spring.
- Make bug hotels
- Plant to encourage wildlife
- Make a small pond area

We will let you know what happens!