



Children's Activity Sheets



Love your Burial Ground Week/Churches Count on Nature 2025

Saturday 7th – Sunday 15th June

Calling teachers, youth group leaders, brownies or cubs leaders and everyone who works with primary school age children!

These children's activity sheets can be used to develop activities for use during Love your Burial Ground Week/Churches Count on Nature 2025, which runs this year from Saturday 7th to Sunday 15th June. We are encouraging participants to use iNaturalist, a fun and easy-to-use app on a smartphone or tablet, which helps with species identification and documents your findings, and is particularly popular with children. Please [REGISTER](#) your event on our website so that we can post you our Starter Guide and fold-out wildlife chart to help you get started along with these digital resources.

Many burial grounds are brimming with wildlife, partly as a result of their age and timeless nature. Islands of tranquillity within both urban and rural land, they have often escaped the loss of wildlife and habitat that has occurred elsewhere. The grassland within burial grounds can be full of flowers and insects such as bees, butterflies and grasshoppers. Burial grounds frequently contain large and ancient trees in which are found many bird, mammal and invertebrate species. Monuments and stone walls can host creatures such as lizard, frogs, newts, solitary bees and particular plants like mosses and ferns. There are often areas of long grass, scrub or shrubs which may contain slow worms, hedgehogs and birds. Burial grounds are therefore immensely valuable wildlife habitats with a wide range of plants and animals present.

Contents of this activity pack include:

- Four seasons poster
- Preparation before a visit
- Guide to using iNaturalist
- Spotters Guides
 - Wildflowers Spotters Guide
 - Butterfly Spotters Guide
- Tremendous Trees
 - Tree measuring
 - How tall is your tree?
 - How old is your tree?
- Mini beast hunting
- Bumble bee and slow worm shapes to colour, cut out or collage

We hope you enjoy taking part in Love your Burial Ground Week/Churches Count on Nature!

SPRING

Look and listen for:



SUMMER

Look and listen for:

Spring flowers including the bright, shiny yellow of lesser celandine.
Look for primroses and daffodils, also called Lenten lilies as they flower during Lent.
 Bird song, the chiffchaff calls its name, green finch give a nasal chirring and song thrush repeats a phrase 3 times!
Can you spot a brimstone, an orange tip or a comma?
 An early visit will be rewarded with the glory of the **spring dawn chorus!**
 Early butterflies including the churchyard classic, the holly blue which feeds on holly and ivy.
 Bumblebee queens waking up and finding holes and crannies to nest in and lay eggs
Reptiles including lizards basking in the sun, slow worms using a sheltered warm spot to heat up and perhaps the discarded skin of a grass snake or adder
Mammals on the move again including tracks and signs of hedgehog.

Early summer flowers and fine grasses such as sweet vernal grass, oxeye daisy, Lady's bedstraw, bugle, quaking grass and yellow
 Late summer flowers including betony, black knapweed and scabious
 Swifts, swallows and house martins hunting for flying insects.
 Jackdaws and rooks flying and calling flocks in the evenings.
 Butterflies, including meadow brown, red admiral and peacock and day-flying moths such as the humming-bird hawk and burnet moths.
Crickets and grasshoppers in the long grass.
 Frogs, toads, newts which have left their breeding ponds; **search for them in damp, cool places.**
 Mouse and vole 'runs' through long grass which you see once the grass is cut and raked.



Snowdrops giving an early hint of spring.
 Colourful lichens in the slanting winter sun.
 Yew berries within evergreens, particularly yews. They can be seen all year round, including winter.
 Rooks in a rookery, starting to build nests in February with lots of cawing and squabbling over sticks for their nests.
 Hawfinches on yews, splitting open seeds with their large, strong beaks. You won't see them, but overwintering invertebrates use hollow stems and plant tussocks.
Bird and mammal tracks through the snow.

Grassland fungi such as the colourful waxcaps and spindles, also earthstars under yew trees.
 Yew berries with winter thrushes feasting on them; mistle thrush, fieldfare and redwing which have migrated from colder climes.
 Green woodpeckers feeding on yellow meadow ants within the anthills in the
 Tawny owls calling at night, and it's a noisy business!
 the parent birds drive away their young away in autumn
 Ivy flowers buzzing with bees, and second brood butterflies including speckled wood and holly blue.
 Mammals preparing for the winter, squirrels burying nuts and the last sightings of bats hunting for insects.

WINTER

Look and listen for:

AUTUMN

Look and listen for:

Preparation before a visit

General Do's and Don'ts

Burial grounds are special places, and while most sites welcome visitors looking at their wildlife and history, this is not their primary purpose. Here are a few things you should remember to get the most out of your visit whilst respecting its importance:

- Do discuss with your group why the site is important to people.
- Do be aware that these are places for burial, people visiting graves may appreciate peace and quiet.
- Do be sensitive around recent graves and ones that are regularly visited. It may be better to keep to the older areas of the site where you are less likely to find recent burials.
- Don't allow children to climb or lean on the monuments, for their safety and as a sign of respect.

In our experience, managers of burial grounds will gladly welcome groups and are keen for children and families to learn to enjoy these fascinating places. They may even offer some help or advice on particularly interesting areas to seek out.

Introducing Burial Grounds to Children

It is impossible to spend time in a burial ground with children without talking about death, how easy we find this varies and often depends on personal experience. Whatever your belief system, the burial grounds serve a very practical purpose and this can be a good place to start e.g. 'what is this place for?' 'why do we need it?'

Children often understand the concept of things being old and precious and this can be a useful way of describing the memorials and gravestones that encourages them to be careful with them.

Once children understand the function of a burial ground it can be useful to discuss why people visit it, how it might make people feel in simple terms:

- People often feel sad when someone dies, visiting their loved one's grave can make them feel better.
- Burial grounds can be peaceful places, sometimes it is nice to come to sit.
- Burial grounds can be beautiful places, so it is nice to visit.

Ask the children why they think people come to the burial ground. This can also help encourage appropriate behaviour.

What you might need

As for any outdoor activity, wear clothing that suits the weather and sturdy footwear that can deal with uneven and damp surfaces. You might like to wear waterproof trousers or take something to sit/kneel on when you are looking at plants and insects.

You might also like to take a notebook and pencil, a camera, a small pot with a lid for looking at bugs and a simple identification guide if you have one. We have a Starter Guide in the Resources section of our website designed for families and those starting to observe wildlife. Once you have registered we will send you two copies of our Starter Guide and a colourful fold out Guide to wildlife of burial grounds. You can also [download the Starter Guide from our website](#).

iNaturalist Guide



Using iNaturalist with iPhone

1. Download the iNaturalist app from the [app store](#).
2. Open the app and create an account.
3. Login to your account on the app.
4. Join the Beautiful Burial Grounds project - this can be accessed by going to Projects on the bottom of the screen then search for Beautiful Burial Grounds and press Join. Navigate back.
5. Tap observe.
6. Add one or more photos as evidence.
7. Choose what you saw.
8. When you saw it should be added automatically.
9. Where you saw it should be added automatically.
10. Tap projects, then select Beautiful Burial Grounds.
11. Tap save/share.



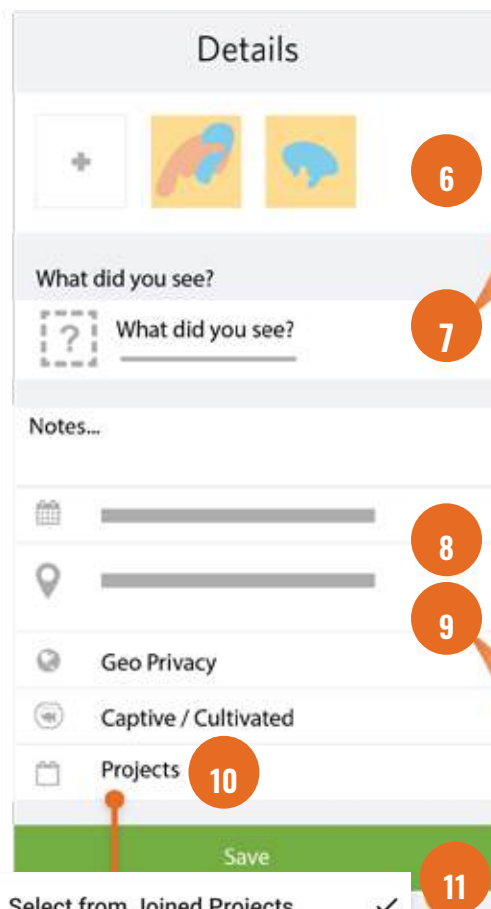
New to iNaturalist? Sign up now!



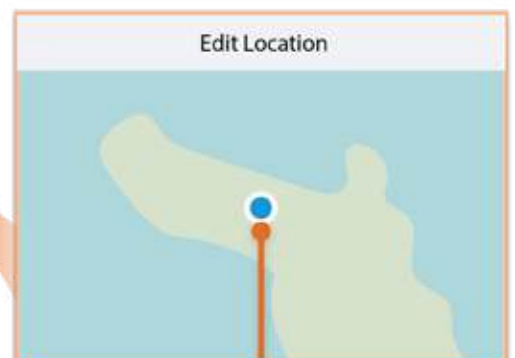
Beautiful Burial Grounds

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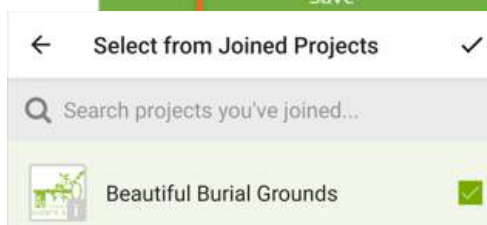
Explore → Observe Me More



Choose one of the computer vision suggestions, search for something else, or type in a 'Placeholder' if offline





The app should fetch your location automatically and display it on the map. If it doesn't, go to the Settings app and tap Privacy to enable Location Services for iNaturalist



iNaturalist Guide



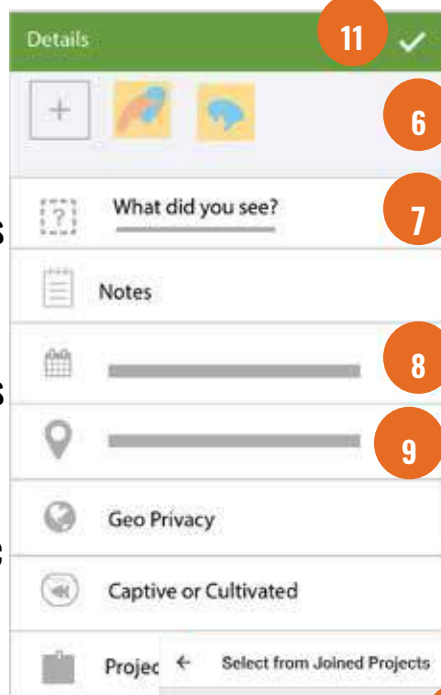
Using iNaturalist with Android

1. Download the iNaturalist app from the [play store](#). 
2. Open the app and create an account.
3. Login to your account on the app.
4. Join the Beautiful Burial Grounds project - this can be accessed via the sidebar, then tap on projects and search for 'Beautiful Burial Grounds'. Navigate back to My Observations main page.
5. Tap the green observe button. 
6. Add one or more photos as evidence.
7. Choose what you saw.
8. When you saw it should be added automatically.
9. Where you saw it should be added automatically. Make sure to select the Beautiful Burial Grounds Project.
10. Tap projects and select Beautiful Burial Grounds
11. Save your observation.
12. Sync should happen automatically, click sync if not.

New to iNaturalist? Sign up now!



Beautiful Burial Grounds



Choose one of the computer vision suggestions, search for something else, or type in 'Placeholder' if offline



Choose Location

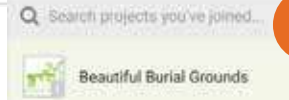


The app should fetch and display your location automatically. If it doesn't, tap through to get your location manually.



Sync 1 observation

12





Meadow Vetchling



Wildflower Spotter's Guide - Summer

We would love to know what wildflowers you have in your burial ground!

Please pop here to find out how to submit your records and get your burial ground on the map!

<https://bit.ly/cfgarecords>



Self-Heal



Betony



Red Campion





Harebell



Buttercup



Dog Rose



Field Scabious



Knapweed



Red Clover



Fox and Cubs



Lesser Stitchwort



Common Vetch



Yellow Rattle

Churchyards, cemeteries and other burial sites are often the oldest enclosed piece of land in the parish, town or city. The grassland will have been relatively undisturbed, reseeding naturally for hundreds of years. It will also have been both mown for hay and grazed by animals during its time as a burial ground. A benefit of this continuity of management over a very long time is a rich diversity of grasses, flowers and animals. This old unimproved grassland was once widespread in the UK but is now rare.

Since the 1940s over 97% has vanished. Most burial grounds pre-date the 1940s so are now some of the few places it remains.

iNaturalist is a free app for your phone that helps you identify what you have seen. We have set up our own project on this app called 'Beautiful Burial Grounds': if you give it a go we look forward to seeing what you find! For more information on submitting records please visit www.bit.ly/cfgarecords

Butterfly Spotter's Guide - Summer

We would love to know what butterflies you see in your burial ground!

Please pop here and find out how to get your burial ground on the map.

<https://bit.ly/cfgarecords>



Brimstone



Brown Argus



Comma



Gate Keeper



Holly Blue



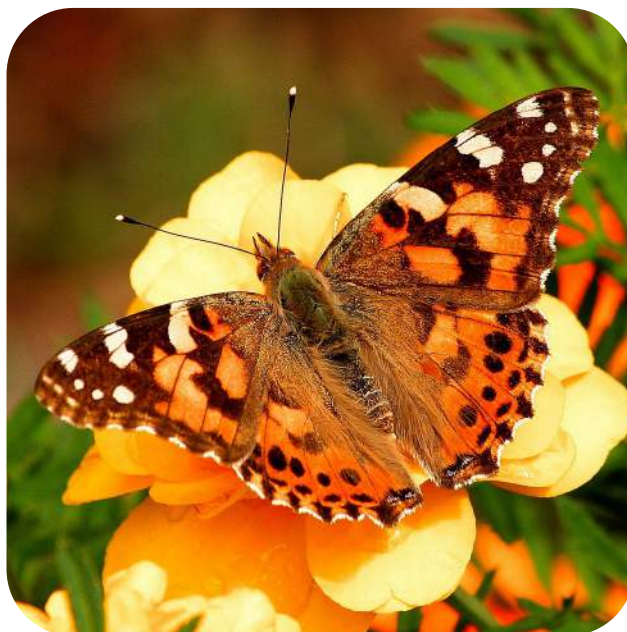
Large White



Large Skipper



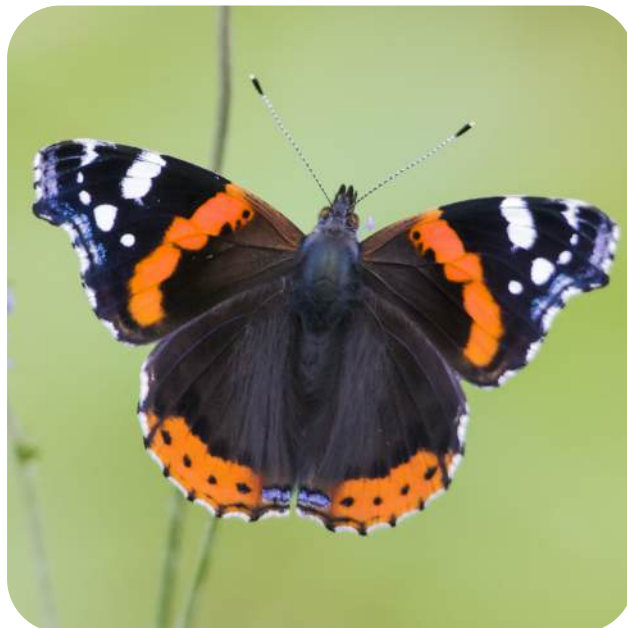
Orange Tip



Painted Lady



Peacock



Red Admiral



Tortoiseshell



Ringlet



Small Copper



Common Blue

The UK has 59 species of butterflies – 57 resident species of butterflies and two regular migrants – the Clouded Yellow and Painted Lady.

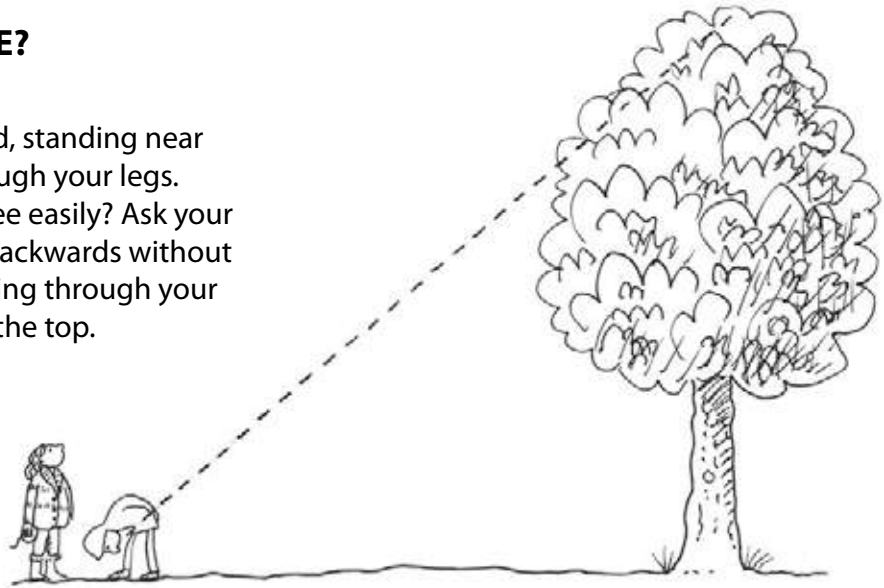
Caterpillars need food plants to survive. If you leave areas of grass to grow a bit longer and bloom over the summer months, butterflies will visit to lay their eggs – meaning more butterflies next year! We have a detailed information sheet on butterflies, moths and other insects in our Action Pack. This includes a list of the popular plants for the different species you may see – caterpillars can be quite choosy so the more plant species you have, the more butterfly species you will help.

If you need help in identifying butterflies then use the iNaturalist app to photograph them and it will suggest likely matches as well as making a biological record. iNaturalist is a free app for your phone that helps you identify what you have seen. We have set up our own project on this app called 'Beautiful Burial Grounds' : if you give it a go we look forward to seeing what you find! For more information on submitting records please visit www.bit.ly/cfgarecords

TREE MEASURING

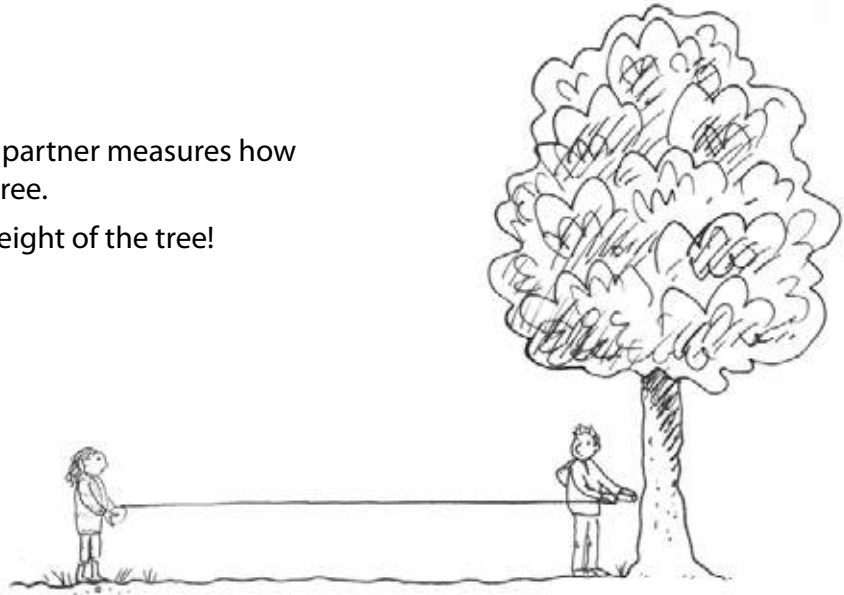
HOW TALL IS YOUR TREE?

Choose a tree to measure and, standing near to it bend over and look through your legs. Can you see the top of the tree easily? Ask your partner to help you to walk backwards without tripping while you keep looking through your legs. Stop when you can see the top.



Stand up and stay still while your partner measures how far you are from the trunk of the tree.

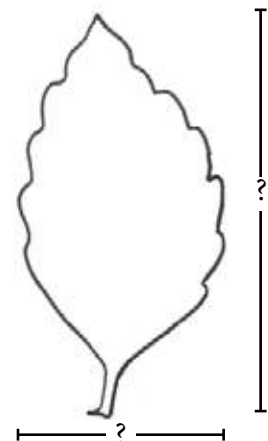
This distance is the same as the height of the tree!



HOW MANY OTHER PARTS OF THE TREE CAN YOU MEASURE?



Leaf - length and breadth?
Around a branch?
Around the trunk?



HOW OLD IS YOUR TREE?

Give your tree a hug. It may take more than one of you to reach right around.

The distance between the tips of your fingers when your arms are outstretched is approximately the same as your height. How many hugs do you need to give the tree in order to reach right round?



Multiply the number of hugs by your height in cms

To find out how old the tree is you need to multiply this number by two as this gives you the number of years old.

Your height = **cm**

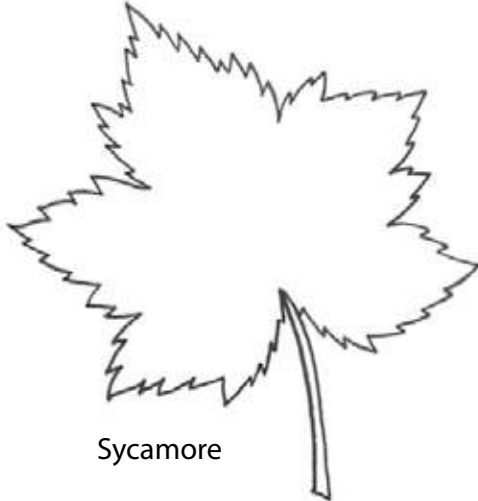
X number of hugs =

X 2 = **age of the tree in years**



Can you find a tree
the same age as you?

LEAF TEMPLATES



Sycamore



Hawthorn



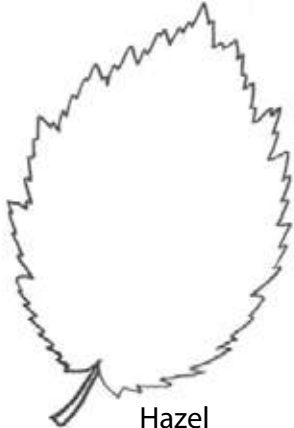
Holly



Oak



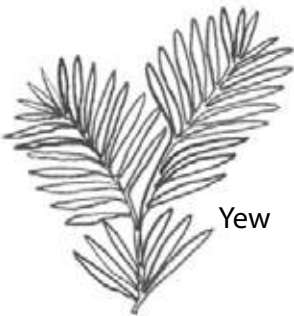
Ash



Hazel



Which leaves can you find?
Can you find different ones?

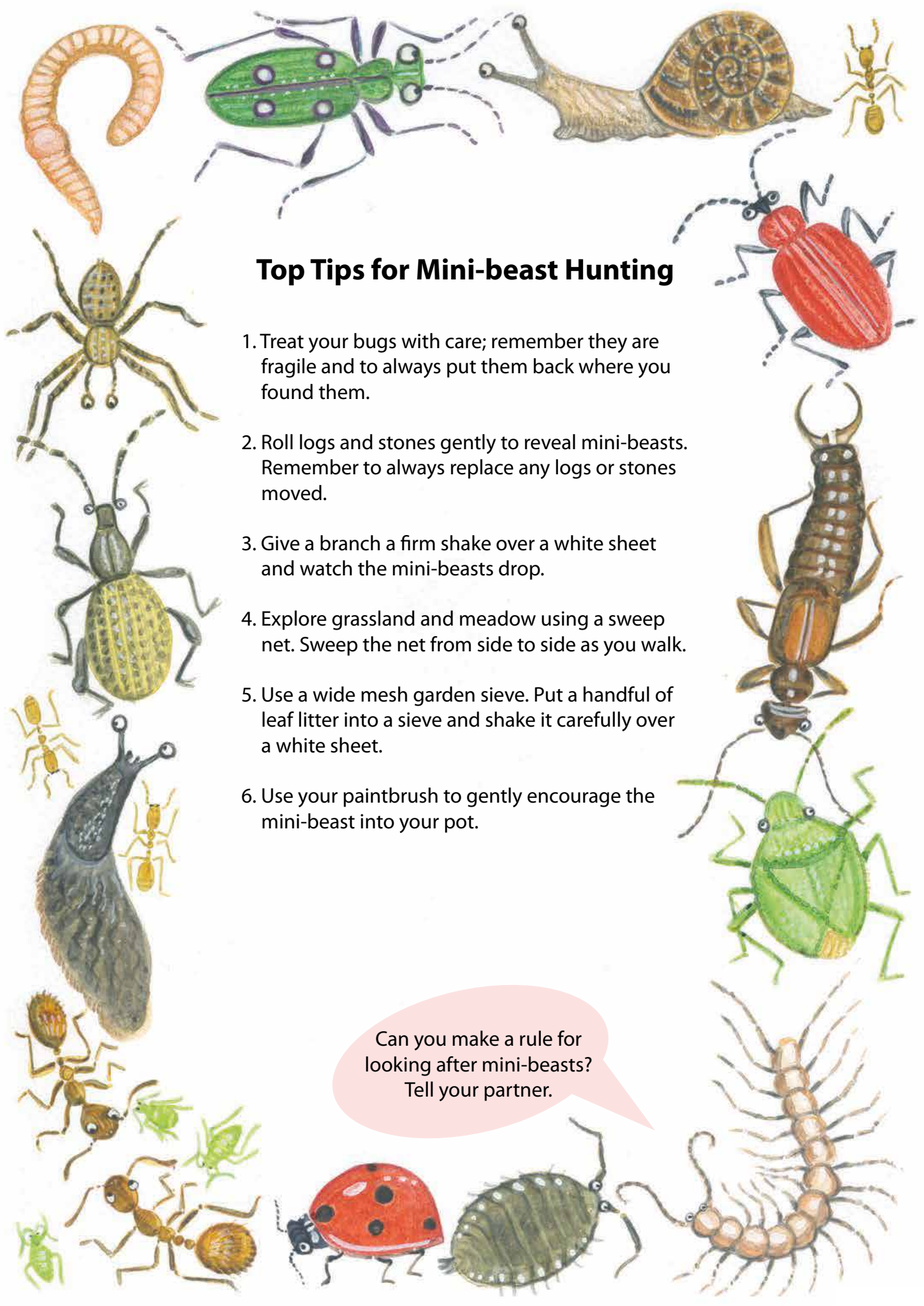


Yew



Beech





Top Tips for Mini-beast Hunting

1. Treat your bugs with care; remember they are fragile and to always put them back where you found them.
2. Roll logs and stones gently to reveal mini-beasts. Remember to always replace any logs or stones moved.
3. Give a branch a firm shake over a white sheet and watch the mini-beasts drop.
4. Explore grassland and meadow using a sweep net. Sweep the net from side to side as you walk.
5. Use a wide mesh garden sieve. Put a handful of leaf litter into a sieve and shake it carefully over a white sheet.
6. Use your paintbrush to gently encourage the mini-beast into your pot.

Can you make a rule for looking after mini-beasts?
Tell your partner.

Take a closer look

What is it called?	How many legs does it have?	How many body parts does it have?
Draw where you found it?	List the food you think it eats.	
Describe how it moves. Does it run, wiggle or fly?	How big is it? Measure its length	
My Mini-beast		

Choose one mini-beast and have a closer look



Minibeast Identification Key

Photographs © northeastwildlife.co.uk & Butterfly Conservation

