



FOREST SCHOOL MAGAZINE

"When we tug at a single thing in nature we find it attached to the rest of the world." - John Muir



April 2020

Hi everyone! I don't know about you, but we are very much missing being in the woods with you all and just doing what we do there. But even though we aren't meeting doesn't mean we can't stop enjoying the natural world together. I've put together this Forest School Magazine, and you might like to look through and have a go at some of the activities. Why not begin with making the 'scavenger hunt' bag to put in some of the things you find interesting during your explorations of your garden, or the footpaths, hedgerows or fields? Or how about learning a knot so that when you are back in the woods you can put them to good use or use them for den building.

If you would like to share, **we'd love to hear** about anything you have done and welcome any contributions. You can let your class teacher know via Dojo. I look forward to hearing about the results of any of the activities.

Have fun really using all your senses and noticing everything around you and finding interesting things. By for now.

Steph, Gina and Sarah

In this New Letter you will find

- How to make scavenger hunt bag
- Star Gazing info
- Special focus on - BADGERS
- Badger collage
- Badger challenge
- Cooking on a fire - recipes to try
- Knots of the week
- Bird boxes
- Eye Spy Bingo
- Spring word search
- Being a poet before you know it

Hello Springtime! By Steph

All the seasons bring an individual joy to me, but Spring is the one that I look forward to with the most anticipation. Although I love the cosiness and coldness of winter, by the end of March and with the excitement of Christmas long gone, I am very ready to say goodbye to the drabness of winter and, like the clocks, ready to spring forward to Spring.

'Notice our Natural World' Challenge!

Be inspired. Take a photo or draw a picture of what you think is your own special memorable sign that Spring is here. or draw a picture and start a nature journal. Now is a great time for kick starting the senses and noticing everything around us. Maybe **watch Chris Packam's fantastic morning broadcast with his step daughter, Megan**, on Facebook for inspiration.

I love seeing the gradual emergence of colour from the soft browns of winter with the shocks of white flowers on the Blackthorn and Hawthorne trees, bursts of green of new leaves and buds, darting peacock butterflies who have been hibernating, the silvery flash of white butterflies and glints of yellow the predominant colour of spring wildflowers. It's always a marvel to me that all this new life springs back with a vengeance after the long months of January, February and especially March.

EASY PEASY - SPRING PO-E-TREE

Spring is an important for many communities in the world. For centuries writers have celebrated Spring with sonnets and long beautiful poems - think Shakespeare and Wordsworth among the few. You say writing poetry is hard right? You have to be a professional writer - right? *Wrong!* Here is a simple recipe for guaranteed success!

Ingredients:

Pen or pencil and paper or a voice recorder if you prefer

An outdoor space

Optional: You may wish to have a helper - one that is going to be quiet and has a good memory or can write or use the voice recorder. And you can do this together too.

Method

Step 1: Find somewhere to lie down outside - maybe on the grass -where you will safe and comfortable. Lie down on your back with your eyes closed.

Steph 2: Now listen carefully to all that is going around you. What can you hear - droning insects, chattering birds, silence? Smell the air, how does it smell - grassy, clean, rainy? Feel the ground with your fingers. What can you feel, what does it feel like - soft, crunchy, spikey...? Think Spring. Let thoughts drift into your mind.

Step 3: Open your eyes. Sit up and think of simple words or that jump straight into your mind about Spring. Write them down or record them. Hey Presto! There you have your poem. You can use this method for any subject.

Steph's poem

Floating clouds and
Blue skies.
Warm sunshine, yellow
Flowers.
Noisy birds, tickling Insects.
Cut grass, green leaves Green
Spring!

EASY PEASY LEMON SQUEEZY
- NOW YOU ARE POET -
LET EVERYONE KNOW IT!

Sneaky challenge! How about going further and making a rap. Maybe together with a friend on Zoom or Slack.

If you want to you can use the letters that make up the word SPRING to organise your poem. Your poem will then be an Acrostic poem. How clever are you.



Sunshine warming.
Planting seeds.
Racing lawnmowers.
Icecream coldness.
Noisy birds.
Green Green!
SPRING HAS SPRUNG



SPECIAL FOCUS ON BADGERS



Badger Detectives

We are so lucky to play in areas where badgers choose to live. How do we know they are nearby? Well they leave little signs.

- Ground disturbance where they dig for grubs or roots
- Snuffle holes made by noses looking for worms. These are usually oval or round and a few centimetres deep.
- Destroyed wasps nests: badgers eat wasps and dig through the top to avoid getting stung.
- Badger hair
- Steam: on cold days steam may be seen rising from the badger sets
- Footprints.

Badger trails are used for many generations and you can see where there is a track through hedgerow and the ground has been trodden down. Even when the track is ploughed over the badger will still use the same virtual path until it reappears again. An animal trail through the undergrowth is called a schmoose.



The Badger is a nocturnal mammal which makes it very hard to see them during the day. It has distinctive black and white colouring. Between January and March Badgers will give birth to two to three babies. Babies are called cubs. They will be weaned at twelve weeks and may either find a new social group or stay within the family group. The Badger is a very sociable animal spending lots of time playing with their young and grooming each other.

What do badgers eat? They love eating worms, insects, small mammals. They raid wasps nests and occasionally bees nests. Did you know we can tell what animals eat from looking in their poo?

All about Badger Poo



Badger poo varies from firm and sausage-shaped, to softer, slimier and darker if they've been eating lots of worms!

Badgers are very clean animals. Unlike other animals that live underground, they have.

separate toilet areas usually 10 to 20m away from the main set. Known as dung pits The poo pits vary in size and poo smells sweet and musky. They often walk and poo on the edges of their territory so other badgers know they live there. Pits will slowly be filled up until almost full and then the badgers will move onto another one. So, be careful, if you are walking near badger setts, the old dung pits are covered up old leaves and sticks. Keep a nose out for a musky smell otherwise you might have a shoe covered in badger poo!



BADGER HOMES

Badgers usually live in big holes in the grounds called setts. Occasionally they will live in culverts. The entrance holes for badgers setts are not round in shape they are shaped like a capital D with the flat bit on the bottom. They are 25-30cms wide and typically 20cm high. The holes (chambers) are all linked by tunnels. The outside of the hole will be large but the tunnel will get smaller further down.



The floor will be rock hard where the badgers walk and tread the earth flat.

To make their homes cosy, badgers drag dry grass, bracken and straw long distances to their sets. They use leaves, green plants, pine cones, bits of plastic sheeting and sometimes old clothes they find!

You may see clumps of bedding at the entrance to the setts. This is either old bedding dragged out and you may see fur and old bones! Or new bedding ready for use. In spring they often use green bedding materials. It is thought badgers do this because as the green bedding rots down, the heat from the process of decomposing will keep baby cubs.

Challenge: Design a Dream Badger 'Hotel'

Have a go at designing your dream badger set. There are lots of different chambers in a badger set, these could be used for different things. Maybe a badger would like a treadmill, so she doesn't have to go out when it's raining. Possibly a luxurious kitchen to cook up all the lovely plants. Maybe your badger is intellectual and would like a library. *After you have done this, you might like to write a little story about the badgers that live in your badger house and create a whole Badger World.*

BADGER TRACKS

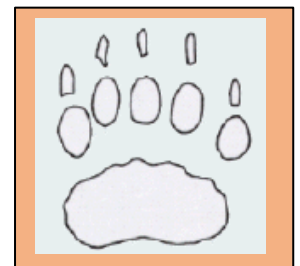
Source: Badger World



The badger has powerful short-wide feet. They have prominent toes and long strong claws. Perfect for digging their homes or grubbing for worms.

They usually put their weight on their toes when they walk. This is called being **digitigrade**. But they are heavy animals and sometimes they place their whole foot on the ground. This is called **semi-plantigrade**

A good typical print will show claws, toes and the main pad (like the palm of your hand)



Badgers often will put their back foot where their front foot was and this can make it difficult to see a clear print.

Sometimes you will see the heel pad too, if the ground is squishy such as mud, sand or snow

A badgers hind (back) foot has shorter claws than the front. Can you think of why this is?

ACTIVITY SHEET

EYE SPY BINGO DIARY

Keep your eyes peeled when you are in your garden, out walking or are just looking out of a window in your house. Once you have spotted what is in a square put a line through the box note the date when you saw it and where and when. This will give you a little micro diary of our natural world. during the next few weeks. How about keeping a journal.

Happy spotting!

			
<p>Bee Day/Where? What kind?</p>	<p>Worm Day? Where?</p>	<p>Blackbird Day? Where</p>	<p>Blue Tit Day? Where</p>
			
<p>Hawthorn & or Blackthorn Day When/Where</p>	<p>Butterfly Day Where/what kind?</p>	<p>Snail Day Were?</p>	<p>House Sparrow Day Where?</p>

SPRING WORD SEARCH

Top tip: you don't have to be a good speller - just good at looking.

WORDS TO FIND

- Bee
- Badger
- Blackbird
- Fire
- Banana
- Worm
- Spring
- Catapult
- Butterfly

B	B	U	T	T	E	R	F	L	Y
B	A	F	I	R	E	C	U	C	Q
T	L	N	N	B	X	S	D	A	U
W	S	A	A	B	B	J	H	T	B
L	P	W	C	N	X	Z	M	A	C
W	R	L	N	K	A	M	D	P	L
O	I	V	S	X	B	G	W	U	M
R	N	P	H	O	E	I	O	L	V
M	G	O	O	R	A	H	R	T	H
B	U	B	E	E	E	H	U	D	A



CAMPFIRE COOKING

It seems that everyone has been trying their hand at baking in the kitchen. How about, if you have a garden, venturing outdoors and cooking over a campfire or charcoal bbq. If you have learnt some fire lighting skills you could practice these (check with a grown up first of course!). Here are some simple tried and tested recipe as suggestions. If you do cook, we'd love to see pictures of your results, what went well, what didn't and some cooking creations you think your friends would enjoy.

Damper bread snake sticks. Makes around 12 snakes.

You will need: Live (green) sticks cut from a tree not off the ground, one per person, mixing bowl, measuring jug, spoons, tinfoil

Ingredients for the snakes 500g self-raising flour 400ml water, pinch of salt.

How to: Add all the dry ingredients into a mixing bowl and mix them together by hand. Slowly add the water a little at a time and continue mixing together. Knead the mixture together until it forms a dough. Divide the dough into 6 - 12 pieces for each member of the team. You don't need a big ball of dough.

If you haven't taken the bark off your stick, or you are not sure whether it is suitable for eating from cover half of each stick in tin foil. In your hands, roll your piece of dough into a long thin snake (no bigger than 1cm thick otherwise it won't cook well). Wrap your snake around your foil covered stick, with gaps in the spiral wrapping, and press it down to ensure it's fixed in place.

To cook: stand near to the campfire and hold the handle of your stick. Place the dough over the fire. It should not go in the flames. Holding your damper near to the flames will be hot enough to cook it without burning it. Turn your stick over the heat so that all sides of the damper are evenly cooked. Cook for around 10 minutes or until the damper is firm to touch.

Once cooked, remove the damper from the heat and allow to cool for 2 - 3 minutes. Carefully slide the damper snake off the stick. Spread with jam or any other spread.

Try adding some grated cheese to the dough, or chillies! Or any other seasoning that tickles your taste buds.

Campfire quesadillas

Take tomato paste, pizza sauce, or ketchup, spread this on one soft tortilla, top with grated cheese place another soft tortilla on the top. But the sandwich in a hot dry frying pan on the fire and cook until the bottom layer has crisped. Flip over and crisp the top and the cheese is melting. Tip: you can put anything in the filling - chocolate spread and banana is yummy!

S'mores Spike normal or large sized marshmallows on a long stick and hold the marshmallows over the hot embers - not high flames. When they are tinged brown all over, sandwich the marshmallow between two biscuits - chocolate sides of the biscuits on the inside. Note: marshmallows are like molten lava when hot so be careful before biting into one.

Cooking challenge? Baked bananas - Leave skins on, cut down the middle and fill. Wrap in foil and place on fire - what fillings can you find. What was your favourite? Do you need foil?

SPACE ADVENTURING FROM THE BACKGARDEN

Activity: Star Gazing (a good free app is SkyView free)

We have had some lovely warm weather and the evenings are not so cold. Why not set up camp in the garden or by a window and look at the beautiful stars. These clear nights are making it the perfect time for a space adventure. Apart from the stars you may even see a satellite or two. You could even have a campfire and cook up some of the food we have mentioned. If you are feeling brave, how about a sleepout

Wrap up warm so you are not running indoors after 5 minutes. And don't forget the hot chocolate!

Some things to look out for

At the time of writing, the planet Venus is shining very brightly.

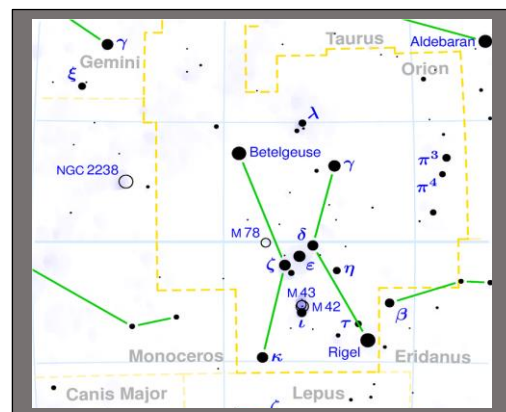
5 Facts about Venus:

- Venus is the second brightest natural object in the sky. ...
- Venus is sometimes referred to as the "morning star" and "evening star".
- One day on Venus is longer than one year. ...
- Venus is named after the Roman goddess of love and beauty.
- Venus is sometimes called Earth's sister planet. Why do you think that is? Bonus question - how many moons and rings does Venus have?



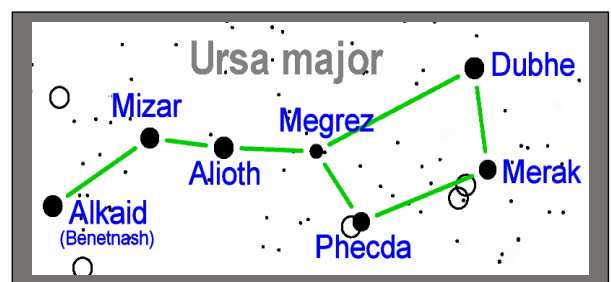
Orion - The Hunter (constellation)

This constellation is also shining very brightly in our skies at the moment. Within in the constellation is a smaller set of stars known as Orion's belt or the Three Kings or Three Sisters. These 3 starts begin to appear at the beginning of January around the time of Epiphany, the Christian holiday commemorating the visit of the Magi to baby Jesus.



Ursa Major - The Plough, Big Bear (Constellation)

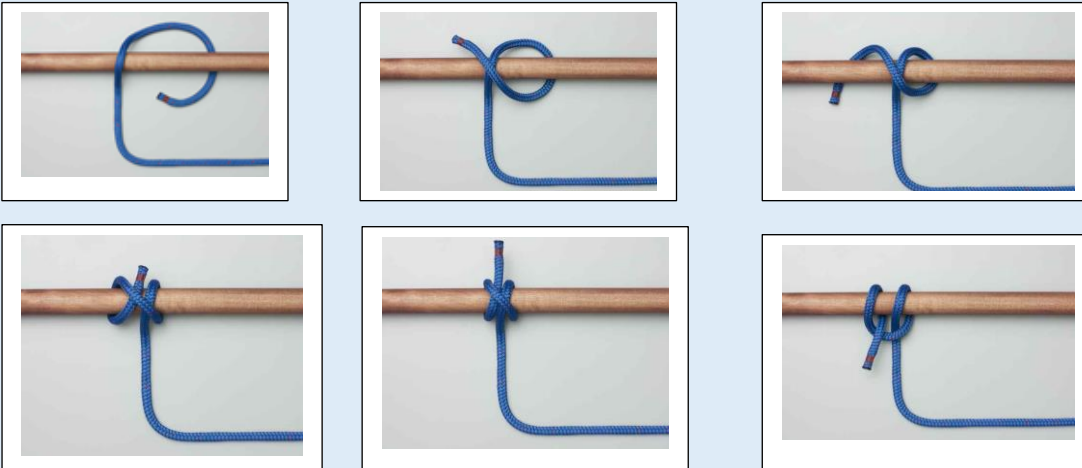
This is a great one to learn as it is one of the easiest constellations to pick out. The stars that form the Big Dipper are the seven brightest stars in Ursa Major: Alioth, Dubhe, Merak, Alkaid, Phecda, Megrez, and Mizar.



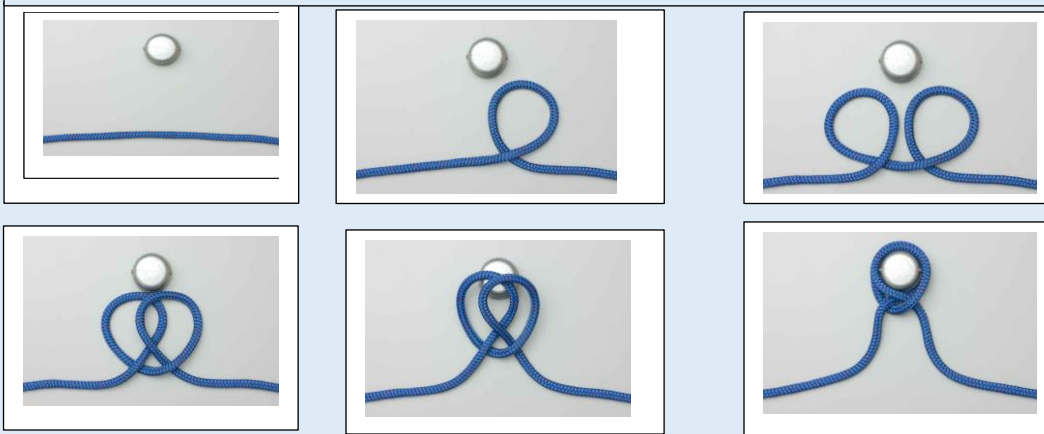
Knowing your Knots

Knowing basic knots is an essential life skill. If you are able to master a number of knots then you can do anything in the Outdoors from building a shelter to making a raft. These knots can be printed out and laminated so it can be added to your Outdoor Adventurers kit. Or just learn and practice this knot so it becomes second nature to you, and you will always be able to use it, wherever you are and whatever the situation. These knots will be good to know for building a catapult and den building.

CLOVE HITCH with rope end. Good for hitching a rope to a fixed end pole



LOOPED CLOVER HITCH Same knot but can be dropped over a pole



The clove hitch is a commonly used and important knot. In Forest School, it is a good knot to use to secure a beginning knot before lashing when making stick frames. BUT it is not a very secure not and could slip.

To see demonstrations of these knots and others, visit www.animatedknots.com

TECHNICAL TERMS

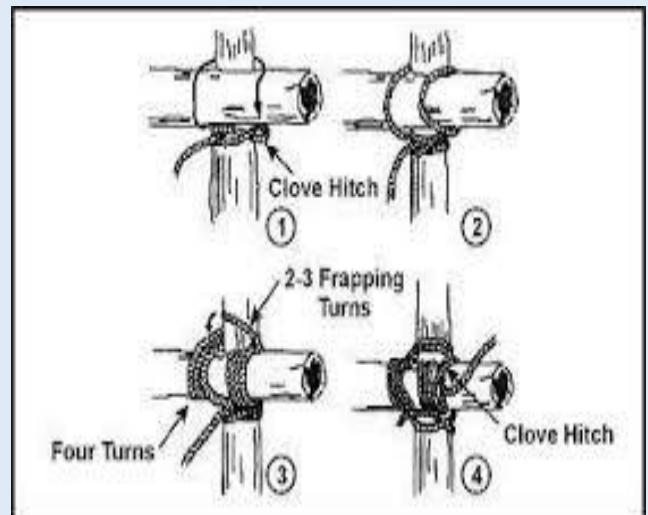
- Frapping Turns:** Additional turns added in another axis to bind a [Lashing](#)
- Loop:** Made when a rope forms a partial circle with the ends crossing each other.
- Standing End:** The long end - the part not knotted. The standing part lies between the standing end and the knot.
- Tail:** The short end - the part getting knotted.
- Turn:** One pass of the rope round or through an object.

Square lashing. Used to fasten poles together across each other or at right angles. EG making a wooden frame. Joining sticks together like this helps you with den building, to make furniture, for campsite areas, frames which can be used to support branches for sawing, with a pole to support a tarpaulin to make a tent, and general gadgets such as picture frames

The Tightening bind is called frapping. If you haven't doesn't this before, it is good to have someone to hold the two sticks together so that you can use both hands to tie the knot.

SQUARE LASHING

1. Attach end of the rope to stick with a clove hitch.
2. Put the sticks together so that they make a cross shape. You are now going to draw a square with the rope going, under over, under over, over. So:
3. Take rope under stick so that it cradles the knot - this is the first bit of the square.
4. Next, then go over the next stick and take rope under so that it cradles the next stick, then go over the next stick which will bring you back to the clove hitch and where you started. Pull tight.
5. Repeat process a few times ending up at the clove hitch.
6. You will notice the two sticks are not held very stably, so next you will do the 'frapping' to secure the lashing.
7. From the stick with the clove hitch go under but then go over the next but one bit of the cross so you are drawing a circle with the rope. Do this a couple of times, pulling tight. Then tie off with a clove hitch.





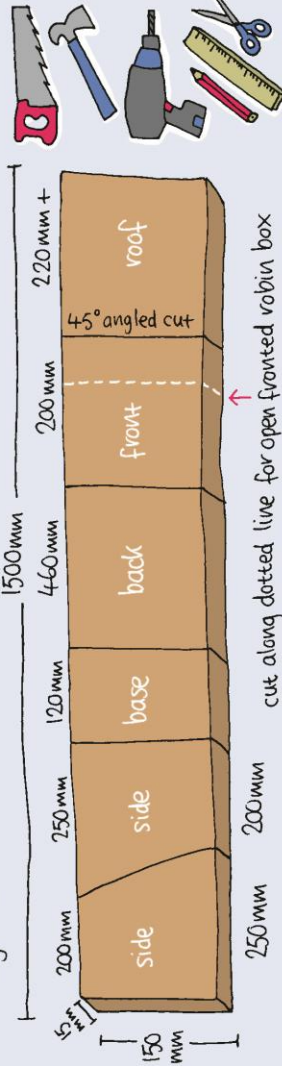
How to make a nest box

wildlife
watch



What you need:

- rough cut timber
- some old rubber or a hinge
- 20mm nails
- tools:



Always get tools to help with an odd job!

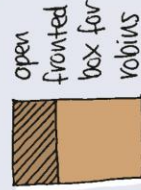
- ▶ saw
- ▶ hammer
- ▶ hand brace or drill
- ▶ pencil, ruler and scissors

1 Mark out and saw panels

Use diagram above, and write the name of each panel onto the marked out wood.

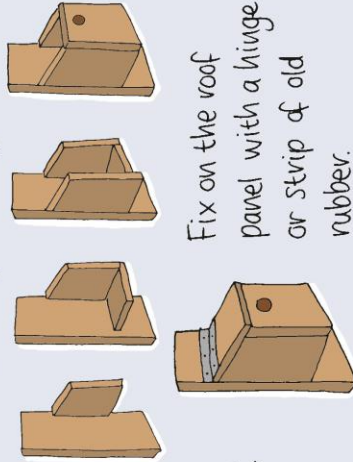
2 Choose your box type

- hole fronted box:
- blue tits (25mm)
- great tits (28mm)
- sparrows (38mm)
- starlings (45mm)



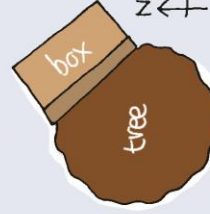
3 Assemble the box

Nail the panels together:



Where to put it:

2-5 metres above the ground, somewhere sheltered.



ACTIVITY - BADGER COLLAGE

Why not use natural materials you can collect from outside, in your garden, or when you go for a walk. Try experimenting. What will your badger look like?

