

The Lower Woods

Friends of Easter
Craiglockhart Hill



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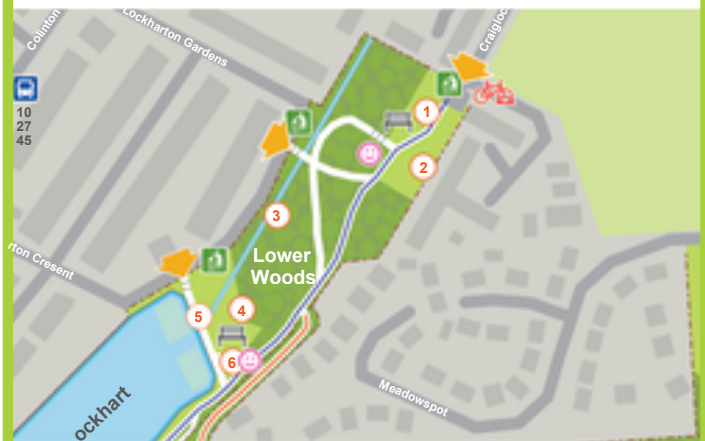
- Document the trip in a journal, poster, or report.

- In a creative session, write your own wild food recipes.

- Use the data from the tree measurements to practise creating graphs and statistics.

About the area

The lower woods is the youngest area of woodland on Easter Craiglockhart Hill and is home to a wide variety of native tree species. It is an area often used by families, youth groups and local primary schools. There are various play spaces throughout the woods such as a set of stepping stones and balance beams, large logs that have been carved to climb on and a fantastic wooden drum.



How to get there

The Lower Woods can be accessed by entrances through the Craiglockhart Terrace or on Lockharton Crescent. The number 45, 10 or 27 bring you to Colinton road. Alight at the Polwarth Terrace or Meggetland Terrace bus stops to access the Craiglockhart Terrace entrance, or alight at the Perdrixknowe stop to get onto Lockharton Crescent.



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Activity Guide: Foraging and Wild Food Tasting

Foraging Best Practice

- ▶ You can forage for personal use on Easter Craiglockhart Hill.
- ▶ Ensure that there is plenty of the species that you are picking.
Do not pick the only flower or set of leaves in the area as this will affect the balance of the local ecosystem.
- ▶ Do not pick protected species or cause permanent damage.
It is illegal to uproot or remove wild plants in Britain.
- ▶ Pick away from paths for plants that grow on the ground.
- ▶ Pick above the knee for flowers and berries that grow on trees and shrubs
- ▶ Wash the foraged items before you use them.

Safety Check!

Wild food tasting is a great way to connect with nature, but it is important that you are certain of the species you are picking as some leaves, berries and flowers found in the woods are poisonous. The species here have been chosen as they should be easily identifiable.



Stinging nettles

Nettles are easily recognisable by their jagged leaves and fine hairs on the stems and leaves. They can sting when picked so it's best to use gloves when collecting. The stinging hairs break down when cooked or very young leaves can be crushed between your fingers for a quick taste.



Few flowered leek

Few flowered leek is an invasive, non-native species that can be found carpeting the woodland floor in spring. It has long thin green leaves, small hanging white flowers and tiny round seeds. All parts of it are edible and taste like spring onion. Picking a lot of it helps to prevent its spread!



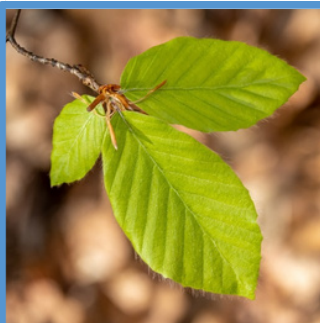
Wild garlic

Also known as ramsoms, this plant has smooth, wide, dark green leaves, which smell of garlic when crushed between the fingers. It can be found in the spring growing in shady woodland areas. In late spring it grows spheres of tiny white flowers. All parts of the plant are edible and taste of garlic.



Wild raspberries

Wild raspberries can be found growing on cane-like shrubs along side paths. The shrubs have a few thorns but they are soft and small. The berries appear in summer, and are a bright pinkish red, covered in fine hairs. They should easily pull away from the stem when they are fully ripe.



Young Beech leaves

Beech leaves have a distinctive which you can see from the side, and very fine hairs that grow along the edge of the leaf. They are bright green and taste like sour apple peel. Beech leaves are only edible when they first burst from the bud but they quickly become bitter as they mature.



Brambles

Brambles are also known as blackberries. They grow on creeping dark green shrubs which are covered in sharp thorns so care is needed when picking them! The berries can be picked in autumn and are black, shiny and soft when ripe. The riper they are, the sweeter they are!

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Activity Guide: Foraging and Wild Food Tasting

Wild Garlic Pesto

Season: Spring

Wild food: Any combination of wild garlic, few flowered leek, garlic mustard, dandelion leaves

Other ingredients: Olive oil; parmesan or other hard cheese; pine nuts or other soft nut (optional); breadsticks or anything else to dip in!

Kit: A pestle and mortar, or any combination of bowl and something to crush and mix with; knife and chopping board, or scissors

Instructions:

- Collect the wild food and wash.
- Chop the wild greens and add to the bowl.
- Add in the cheese and nuts if using, and crush and mix well.
- Add the oil and mix well.
- Dip the bread sticks in to eat!

Wild Soup

Season: Spring and early summer

Wild food: Any combination of stinging nettles, wild garlic, few flowered leek, garlic mustard.

Other ingredients: Water; oil; finely chopped carrot and onion; bouillon or stock cubes; salt and pepper.

Kit: Stove; saucepan; spoon; knife and chopping board, or scissors; mugs or bowls.



Instructions:

- Collect the wild food and wash.
- Heat the oil in the pan and gently cook the onion and carrot for a few minutes.
- Add the water and stock cube/bouillon and simmer for 10 minutes. Add the wild food and simmer for 1 minute.
- Careful as you eat, it'll be hot!

Elderflower Cordial

Season: Summer

Wild food: Elderflowers

Other ingredients: Halved lemon, granulated sugar, water.

Kit: Tea towel, stove, saucepan, spoon, scissors, cups.



Instructions:

- Collect the elderflowers and leave on a tea towel for 10 minute for any bugs to escape.
- Snip the elderflowers off the stems and into the saucepan.
- Add water, sugar and the lemon halves.
- Gently simmer until it becomes a syrup - it will be very hot at this point.
- Allow to cool slightly, then pour into cups and dilute with more water.

Bramble Smoothies

Season: Autumn

Wild food: Brambles

Other ingredients: Milk, natural yogurt, honey.

Kit: Cups, mashing sticks cut from trees, spoons for the honey and yogurt.

Instructions:

- Collect the brambles and give them a quick rinse.
- Collect enough to half fill the cups.
- Use the mashing sticks to mash the brambles to as smooth a paste as you can.
- Add yogurt, milk and honey to taste, and use the mashing sticks to mix them in.
- Drink straight from the cups!

 This symbol means you'll need a stove to cook, so you'll be working with an open flame.

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Activity Guide: Wild Art



Making art from natural materials is a fantastically creative activity. There are no limits or rules to what you can create, but here are some ideas to get you started

- Play with colours using autumn leaves. See if you can make a whole spectrum from one colour to another.
- Make mud cakes and use leaves, flowers and berries to decorate them to a Mary Berry standard!
- You don't need a large space to make art; try making something teeny tiny out of grasses or conifer needles.
- Use repetition for simple, stunning art. Leaf mandalas can be made from circles of repeating patterns.
- Be sure to clear the ground so that any leaf art really stands out.
- Look at some of Andy Goldsworthy's work for inspiration!

And remember, wild art is not built to last. Enjoy it, and then allow it to return to its natural state.



Photo credit: Earth Calling

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Activity Guide: Measuring Trees

Measuring trees is a great way of developing numeracy and mathematical skills while learning outdoors. There are several different methods of measuring trees, so any age group can have a go at it!

Treehugging

The simplest way to measure the girth of a tree is to give it a hug! Kids might have to team up to get all the way around a tree.

Try discussing how to get a measurement from hugging trees, and then you can always use a measuring tape to see how accurate your hugging estimates are.

You can also play with different units of measurement - how many 'hands' wide is the girth of the tree?

Use a pencil

In teams of two, select a tree to measure. One person stays by the tree, the other takes the pencil and walks far enough away that they can hold out the pencil vertically so that the top is level with the tree and so is the base.

Holding the pencil in the same place, they then turn it so that it lies horizontally and level with the base of the tree. Their partner walks away from the tree until it looks like they are standing at the same place as the point of the pencil.

The distance between the pencil holder's partner and the tree is the same as the height of the tree. It can be measured roughly by taking paces or more accurately with a trundle wheel.

Make a ratio stick

A ratio stick is a piece of card exactly 30cm long with a line marked on it at exactly 3cm from the bottom. You should make these while still in the classroom.

Working in pairs, one person stands by the tree and the other takes the ratio stick and walks far enough away that they can hold out the ratio stick vertically so that the top is level with the tree and so is the base. They should then direct the person still at the tree to move their hand along the trunk until it lines up with the 3cm mark on the ratio stick.

The 3cm mark is 1/10 of the way along the ratio stick, so the height marked by the hand will be 1/10 of the height of the tree. Measure the distance between the ground and the hand and multiply it by 10 to get the height of the tree.

Estimating age

Tree girth lines up with the age of trees, which is easy to see if you are able to find a tree stump and can identify the annual rings. However, you can also estimate the age of trees by measuring their girth.

Using a tape measure, measure around the tree trunk at about chest height. On average, the girth of a tree increases by 2.5cm a year. In order to estimate the tree's age, divide the measurement of the girth by 2.5.

You can combine this with Tree I.D. Skills. Once you know the type of tree, you can more accurately estimate the age - for example oak and beech grow only 1.88cm on average, whereas pine and spruce grow 3.13cm. It is also worth discussing what other factors might affect the tree growth and how that will affect the estimates.

Concepts to introduce in the classroom

- *Estimation*
- *Girth*
- *Circumference*
- *Ratio*



Kit list

- Measuring tape
- Trundle wheel
- Metre stick
- Ratio stick
- Clipboards and paper
- Pens/pencils

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Activity Guide: Seed Dispersal

This is an activity to do in the autumn.

Every plant produces a seed in some form. These seeds need space, light, water and nutrients in order to grow into healthy plants. Plants have evolved over time to disperse their seeds in various different ways so that they have the best chance of survival.

Gravity

When these seeds fall from a height they bounce or roll to a new space.

Characteristics: heavy, round, hard, protective shell, seeds grow high up

Examples: conkers



Wind

These seeds float on the wind to get to a new space.

Characteristics: light, fluffy, or wing-like features

Examples: sycamore, dandelion, hazel, birch



Animal fur

These seeds attach to animal fur to hitch a ride to a new space.

Characteristics: covered with barbs or hooks, stick to clothes

Examples: sticky weed, burdock



Animal food

These seeds are eaten and excreted, or buried and forgotten about in a new space.

Characteristics: found in fruit or berries, or as nuts

Examples: rowan, bramble, acorn, hazel



Expulsion

These seeds are spread to a new space by force, when the pod they are in splits explosively.

Characteristics: contained within a pod

Examples: gorse, himalayan balsam



Water

These seeds are adapted to survive in water, and can ride flowing water to a new space.

Characteristics: found on plants near water, buoyant

Examples: willow, alder, bulrush



Collect as many different types of seed, nut, fruit, or berry as you can find. Look at each one and its characteristics, and decide which category of seed dispersal it fits into.

Try extending the activity by designing your own seed and its own dispersal methods. You can use natural materials to create a large scale model of your seed.

Kit list

- Collecting tray

EASTER CRAIGLOCKHART HILL TREES



HOW MANY CAN YOU FIND?

The Lower Woods: Tree Survey Worksheet

Using a tree ID sheet, take a tally of every tree that you can positively identify. There are many parts of a tree you can use for identification:

- Leaves(colour,shape,texture, arrangement on branch)
- Bark(texture,colour
- Buds
- Fruit/seeds
- Flowers

Tree Type	Tally	Total