

## Observational Walk and collecting fallen treasures

### Introduction:

The Garden looks very different at different times of year, but there is always something exciting to learn on our observational walk. These notes will help you explain the seasons to children, and how the area looks in different seasons. Children can collect 'fallen treasure' if they would like to. Treasures should be small enough to fit in a small bag and should only be collected from the ground (rather than picked from a tree or plant). Please leave minibeasts in their garden homes.

### Identifying fallen treasures:

- What season is it? This might help you to work out if it is a seed, twig, leaf or petal.
- Where has it come from? Look at the surrounding area – can children spot any that are still on trees? Children can be helped to use plant labels to identify the tree (see section on understanding plant labels).

### Activities with fallen treasures:

- **Range of treasures:** Children work in pairs and look through their treasure. They should aim to find between 3-6 objects that match. Once they have selected their matching objects, they should make sure they know what they are (the name they give them will vary depending on age e.g. pine cone or pine cone from Giant Redwood). Children then sit back to back. One child selects an object and begins describing it to the second child. The language they use will vary with age (older children can be encouraged to use particular scientific vocabulary). The second child has to use the description to select the correct matching object.
- **Range of treasures:** Choose a particular ecosystem (e.g. pond, river, meadow, woodland) and children try to create a picture of this ecosystem with their fallen treasures. Younger children might create a simple ecosystem e.g. fish, frogs, sun and water for a pond, while older children can be encouraged to use more complex vocabulary e.g. algae, photosynthesis, food chains)

- **Range of treasures:** Children line up their treasures (use less for younger children) and create a story using them. The treasures might be the actual objects in their story retelling, or they might use their imaginations for the treasures to morph into something new.
- **Sticks:** Look carefully at a leaf on a tree, or a fallen treasure. Use sticks that the children have collected to replicate the pattern on the leaf. This could be a collaborative piece of work on a large scale, or individual, smaller pieces of work. For older children, they could find three leaves and create the leaf pattern of one. Other children then have to identify which leaf they have created the pattern of.
- **Leaves:** This activity is particularly good in Autumn, when the colour of the leaves are vibrant. Children to collect a range of colours of leaves and create artwork and patterns with their leaves. Encourage the children to look closely at the leaves – can they notice different shapes?
- **Leaves:** This activity works best in Autumn. Children to collect leaves and share their findings. Can children group the leaves into simple piles? Can they notice difference between the leaves they have classified as the same (e.g. are some more recently fallen than others? Different colours?) For older children, they could create bar charts using the leaves, or back in the classroom, create branching tree diagrams to sort the leaves.
- **Environmental art:** Children use their treasures to create artwork on the ground. This could be individually, in small groups or as a whole class group. For a simple larger group artwork, sticks can be used to create frames or sections for a repeating pattern. Children could explore symmetry and create nature mandalas.