

5-14 NATIONAL GUIDELINES – Environmental Studies/Science TEACHERS SHEET POST-VISIT ACTIVITY: FIND OUT MORE ABOUT TREES

Session Aims: To encourage pupils to investigate more closely the types of trees they have been planting/caring for, and to research additional information about them. Developing the concept of the 'scientific approach' in studying nature.

Activity: Pupils select one of the tree species planted during their field visit, to build up a tree profile. Using scientific vocabulary they should write a description of their chosen tree. They can use any notes or sketches made of the tree(s) they planted. Also, use research to find out more about the distinctive features of each species. If possible, it is helpful if digital photographs can be taken during the field visit. In this way, providing a record of the appearance of representative examples of the planted trees. Use the pupil worksheet to focus ideas and begin your tree description.

Background information: Sources of information about tree species.

The Woodland Trust poster, or similar, may be a helpful starting point. Useful websites include:

www.british-trees.com

Has information on all British tree species – follow the 'native tree guide' link

www.forestry.gov.uk

Forestry Commission website. Follow the links 'Learning', 'Forest factfile' to 'Tree species information'. Has information on five tree species (larch, Scots pine, sessile oak, silver birch and Sitka spruce).

www.saps.plantsci.cam.ac.uk/trees

Has a key for identifying trees and shrubs. Also possible to look up information on individual species. Searches can be by common (as well as Latin) names.

Equipment:

Activity sheets, pencils, information books, access to the internet, display materials. Examples of branches, leaves etc if possible.

5-14 Environmental Studies National Guideline links:

Variety and Characteristic Features :Developing an understanding of the characteristic features of the main groups of plants and animals. The principles of genetics are also considered. Name some common animals and plants using simple keys (Level C).

Give the main distinguishing features of the major groups of flowering and non-flowering plants (Level D).

Create and use keys to identify living things – trees; give examples of inherited and environmental causes of variation (Level E).

Characteristic features of trees to be considered could include the following:

Characteristic feature	Examples
Leaf type	broadleaved, conifer
Leaf shape	round, oval, oblong, narrow, heart shaped, triangular, feather shaped, irregular
Leaf colour	pale green, dark green, green/grey etc.
Leaf texture	smooth, rough shiny, hairy, prickly, powdery
Leaf edge/point	smooth, toothed, lobed, jaggy
Leaf arrangement	opposite, alternate, single, several
Buds	rounded, cylindrical, sticky
Trunk	broad, narrow, single stem, multi stem
Bark texture	smooth, ridged, flaking, patterned
Bark colour	grey, red, brown, white
Flower, fruit or seeds	Small seeds inside a fleshy berry, hard nut inside, cluster of seeds,
Typical places found (habitat) and any special adaptations to it's habitat	Sunny or shady, wet or dry ground, by river/sea, top of a mountain/cliff, deep or shallow soil
Mature height (metres)/other typical measurements (girth – cms at 1m height)	
Tree shape	Draw a sketch/take a photograph
Further information of interest	For example: supports a rich variety of wildlife (oak), one of the first trees to colonise bare ground (birch), timber used to make shinty stick(ash).

If there is easy access to a local park, woodland or established hedgerow, pupils can extend their observation skills, through notes and sketches of other nearby trees. They can study one part of a tree in particular. Bringing back a sample of leaves, fruit, budding twigs to identify. How many different colours and textures can they describe – looking at the bark, branches and both sides of a leaf? Pupils could describe what is found under and around the tree – are there any signs of other plants/animals?

Pupils can present their collected information in a variety of ways – in the form of an illustrated table, a display of annotated sketches, or as an informative poster. Use the pupil worksheet as a basis for their finished work.

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Additional activity:

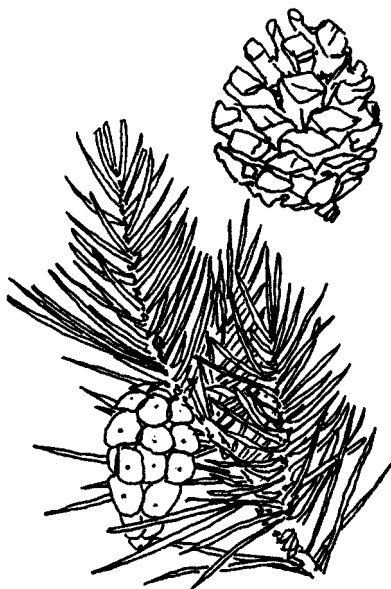
- Using the table of characteristics above, devise a 'compare and contrast' activity between two or three common tree species e.g. 'mix and match' cards. Or, share their findings during Sharing Circle time.

Extension activities:

- Encourage the pupils to find out other interesting information about their chosen tree species. What uses do humans and wildlife make of it?
- Pupils can consider the following questions related to tree form and function: Why do some leaves change colour in the autumn? Why do some trees lose their leaves in winter? What are the benefits and disadvantages of having flat leaves? What are the benefits and disadvantages of needle-shaped leaves? Why are tree seeds different shapes and sizes?



rowan



Scots pine



alder

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Use this activity sheet to start finding out about the species of tree that you have planted.

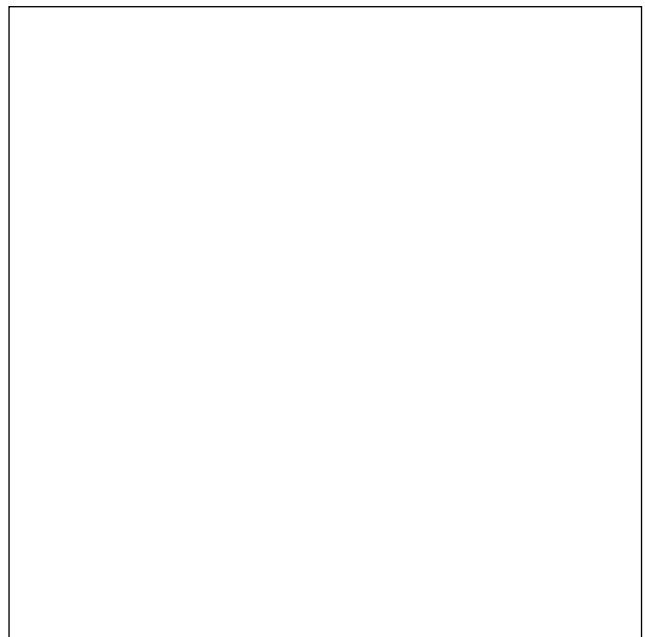
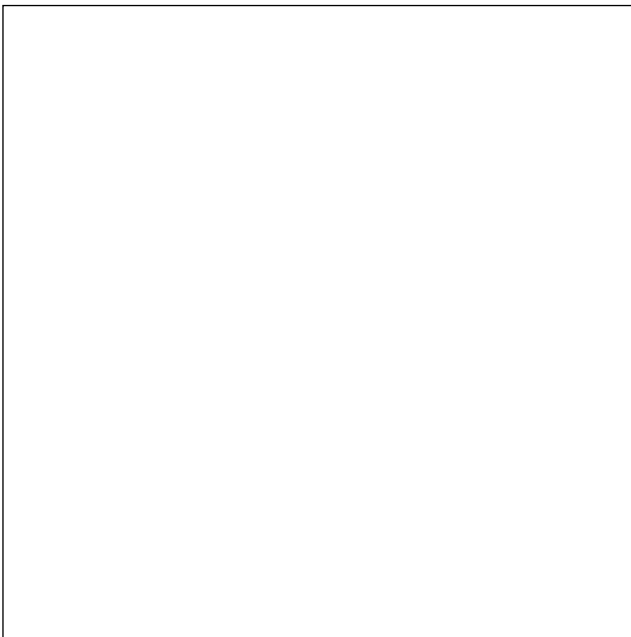
Name _____

Class _____

The species of my tree is

The leaves of my tree are this shape
(draw in the box below).

This is the bark of my tree when it
has grown bigger (draw in the box below).



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Write a description of your tree below. Write this for someone who has never seen your tree before.

1. What are the leaves like or will they look like?

2. What is the bark like?

3. What are the twigs and buds like?

4. Will your tree have any flowers or fruit?

5. The kinds of wildlife that might live in or around my tree are:

6. Why does my tree have no leaves at the moment?