



# Autumn Nature Connection for wellbeing

These simple ideas require no kit or equipment, just the gifts nature offers us. They can be done in isolation or a few at a time, with individuals or groups. Adapt them to meet the needs of your learners.

Many of these ideas could also support curriculum based activities – however when using them to support wellbeing through connection it is recommended to keep the focus on the sensory experiences of the present moment (rather than questioning learners to test knowledge). For example when experiencing leaves, modelling feeling the texture or smelling them would facilitate connection, whereas counting them or asking what shape they are would support mathematical understanding but would likely draw learners out of the connective experience.

## 7 Tips for facilitating connection:

- Embody Connection – being in connection yourself is the best way to facilitate connection in others.
- Think less and feel more – connection is not a knowledge based practice, it is a way of being in relationship.
- Slow down – tune into the pace of nature, be present to the here and now.
- Model awe and wonder – marvel at the gifts nature offers us.
- Adopt a beginners mind – imagine you are experiencing this for the first time, be curious.
- Enthusiasm over expertise – it is more important to be motivated to be outside in nature than an expert in Ecology. The desire for knowledge grows naturally from connection.
- Invite rather than Instruct – offering others the opportunity to join in with activities rather than telling them to sets the tone of the experience. We cannot force someone to connect.



# Ideas to try in nature

## The Specialness of Leaves

- Invite everyone to wander until they find a leaf that calls to them to pick up.
- Take a moment to appreciate the uniqueness of your leaf, use all your senses.
- Hold your leaf up to the sky so the sunshine illuminates it. Notice the colours, patterns, markings, veins, stem, edges. Turn it around. Hold it close to your eye. Hold it at an arm stretch.
- Show a friend what you have noticed that is special about your leaf



## Leaf Tracing

- Invite everyone to take a mindful moment with a leaf.
- With the leaf on the ground, slowly trace around the edge of leaf with your eyes. Notice all the bumps and dips, the stem, the shape. Reverse the direction.
- Repeat this process using your finger to slowly follow the outline.
- Try this with different sizes and shapes of leaves.

## Dancing in the Wind

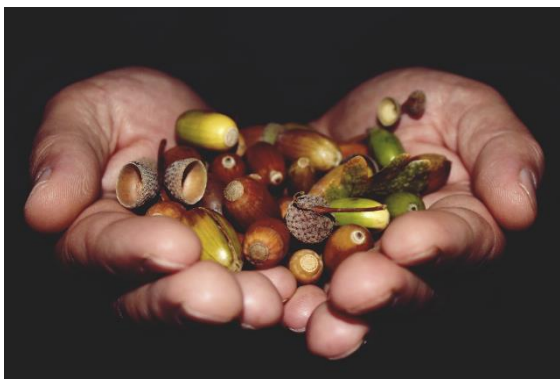
- Invite everyone to sit for a quiet moment outside by some trees and watch the leaves fall (this can be more exciting on a blustery day!). Notice the patterns of movement they make as they dance to the ground.
- If the leaves are not falling, find some to throw in the air one by one and watch them fly.
- If you feel inspired to, move your bodies to mimic the shapes and patterns of the falling leaves.





### The Shades of Autumn

- Invite everyone to explore the colours of autumn by collecting leaves and arranging them in a colour gradient. Notice the subtly different shades of colour and matching them to others.
- This could be done collectively or individually.
- Allow the form of the creation to emerge in whatever form feels right.



### The Sounds of Seeds

- Invite everyone to gather as many different seeds and seed casings that you can find.
- Experiment with ways of making sounds with them. Notice the loudest sound and the quietest.

### Autumn Treasure Bag

- Invite everyone to find a natural object that they find interesting to feel.
- Ask them to bring it to you whilst keeping it a secret and put it in a bag.
- Invite everyone to sit in a circle and close their eyes.
- Slowly take an item out of the bag and pass it round the circle so that each person can feel the item.
- Encourage the learners to notice the sensations in their hands, without trying to label the item or textures. Can they recognise their item when they feel it?





## Autumn Wonder

- Invite everyone to join in with a 'wonder hunt' by asking them to find things in nature that inspire them. You could provide a list to look for or just one at a time.
- If you would prefer not to collect the objects you could take photos instead.
- Here are some example things for a wonder hunt:
  - One thing that makes you smile
  - One thing that makes you curious
  - One thing that gives you hope
  - One thing you'd like to share with someone else
  - One thing that you are thankful for



## Breathing Gratitude

- Invite everyone to gather a big double handful of leaves and hold it in front of their face.
- Take a few moments to breath in the scent of the leaves, whilst focusing your thoughts of gratitude into the bundle. You could whisper your thanks into the leaves.
- When the group is ready, count to 3 and throw the leaves up into the air, sending the gratitude out into the world.

## Discover More:

If you would like to explore more nature connection activities, check out these books:

- Coyotes Guide to Connecting with Nature by Jon Young, Ellen Haas and Evan McGown - <https://amzn.to/3Sh1dSn>
- Sharing Nature, Nature awareness activities for all ages by Joseph Cornell - <https://amzn.to/3SwlrHJ>
- Flow Learning, Opening heart and spirit through nature by Joseph Cornell - <https://amzn.to/3LJZmmM>
- The Children's Forest, Stories and songs, wild food, crafts and celebrations all year round by Dawn Casey, Anna Richardson and Helen d'Ascoli - <https://amzn.to/3dM92AG>
- Earthwalks; an alternative nature experience by Steve Van Matre - <https://amzn.to/3r5ANau>

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