Insect Activities

Let's Go Wild about the National Insect Week. Have fun exploring and learning!

Sweeping

Sweep nets are good for swishing through grass and Catching small insects, although they are not really suitable for butterflies or moths. Nets can be expensive, but you make your own at home using a coat hanger, a suitable length of bamboo cane and a wide carrier bag.

Step 1: Pull out the coat hanger to make a circle but don't untwist or cut it.
Step 2: Straighten out the hook, put it into one end of the cane and attach it with the help of tape.
Step 3: Attach a carrier bag or pillowcase to the coat hanger using tape. Your sweep net is ready!

How to catch Insects with using a sweep net
On a nice and warm day, find an area with long grass (in a garden, park or a field). While walking though it gently move the net from side to side in a figure of eight shape, keeping the mouth of the net in touch with the grass. Once you've walked through a small patch, take a look at your catch by emptying it into a shoebox. You will be amazed to find the number of insects from a small patch of grass.

Hunt for Minibeasts – Insect Safaris, Minibeast Hunts and Bug Walks

National Insect Week occurs at a perfect time of the year for children to get up close and personal with insects and learn more about them, by holding insect safaris, minibeast hunts, and bug walks. All you need for any of these is:

- A magnifying glass - for close up detail
- A container: to put things in
- And most importantly, your eyes to observe the insects

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Don't worry if you find it hard to identify your catch, one simple way you can resolve this problem is by registering your minibeast hunt on the NIW website and you will receive a pocket guide to help you identify the insects. You can also look at other helpful online guides provided by NIW partner organisations listed on the website.

Useful Tip

To make the identification of insects easier you could group them into different categories:
1) INSECTS with wings, six legs and three body parts.
2) OTHER MINIBEASTS with no wings, more or fewer than six legs and more or fewer than three body parts.

Tree Tapping

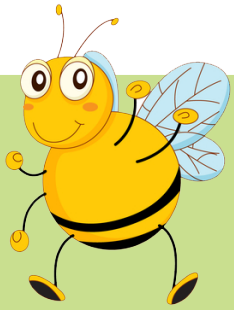
Trees are a great environment for insects and are often teeming with wildlife which are very easy to explore once you know how. The only equipment you will need for this is:

- An umbrella which is white or pale in colour and a stick (for example, a walking stick)
- Then you will need to find a tree that has plenty of leaves

Hold the umbrella upside down while standing under the tree, so it works as a net to catch the insects. Using your stick gently tap the branches. You will find insects like ladybirds, caterpillars and aphids are knocked off into your umbrella ready for you to look at.

Useful Tip

You can try different kinds of trees and compare the catch with your friends, as some insects only live on certain types of trees.



Interesting Insect Information!

Insects are easily the most abundant and diverse group of animals, with more than 24,000 species in the UK alone.

They can be found in almost every habitat on earth, and are fundamentally important to ecology, conservation, food production, animal and human health, and biodiversity.

They are essential to our food production, servicing our ecosystems through pollination, nutrient cycling and predation of plant pests. They are the 'little things that run the world'. This is why the Royal Entomological Society aims to raise awareness and understanding of insects and other invertebrates, and the vital role they play in our lives through its National Insect Week (NIW).

National Insect Week aims to educate young people about insects and the vital role they play in our lives, through a series of events nationwide.

Parents and teachers can get involved in a number of ways to help youngsters have a better understanding of insects and their value.

Insects can be found all around us - in the grass, on trees, visiting flowers, in the soil and in leaf litter. Why not come along to an activity planned near you during National Insect Week or try some of these fun things to do in your own garden or local park.

Thank you to Royal Entomological Society for sharing this fun and informative activity.
For more information on National Insect Week please go to www.nationalinsectweek.co.uk.

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