

# Outdoor Toolkit

The outdoor toolkit is a collection of resources that can be used to teach most curriculum objectives outdoors, having this prepared and stored ready in your classroom will enable you to take your learning outside easily and spontaneously. This is the base set of resources that are used for most of our outdoor lessons inside The Alfresco Hub and form the core component of what you need to take your lessons outside!



**String** is such a versatile resource outside and can turn into just about anything. It could be used for washing lines, forming letters, numbers or shapes and is perfect for creating nature crafts.

**Chalk** is a fantastic writing tool for outdoors, it can be used on playgrounds, walls and fences. Having the jumbo playground size is important to protect children's fingers and is a good tool for developing grip in young children.

**Chalk pens**, we recommend the Uniball chalk pen, are great for use in tuff trays, writing on pebbles and most other natural loose parts.

**Permanent markers** are great for creating natural resources that you would like to keep (thinking alphabet/number pebbles).

**Sticky notes** can be used in lots of different ways. The children could solve problems on sticky notes and take photographs of them in the space you're working in, you could hide sticky notes for children to find, use with the string for creating washing lines or use them for labelling diagrams on the ground.

**Mini bulldog clips and pegs** are both great for pegging resources to twigs, bushes and fences. So they create great fact finding activities! Be mindful though that wooden pegs are the least durable option in different weather types.

**Clipboards** are an invaluable resource for curriculum based outdoor learning. They make writing outdoors easy for children and, if you use the plastic ones, they can be used in all weathers too!

# EYFS

## Understanding the world

### Leaf colour hunt

#### Resources needed:

- Mini bulldog clips/pegs
- Paint sample colour swatches

#### Activity

- > Place individual paint colour swatches into a basket (you could have duplicates of the same colour or different shades of the same).
- > Also have mini bulldog clips/pegs readily available for children to use.
- > Children pick a paint sample card, then hunt for a leaf in your outdoor space to match the colour.
- > They peg this onto the card, then place back into the basket.
- > Pick another card and repeat - keep going until all the paint sample cards have an array of leaves pegged around them!



# KS1 Science

## Seasons - leaf puppets

### Resources needed:

- String
- Chalk pen/permanent marker
- Sticks and variety of leaves (you could ask them to bring these in from a park walk!)

### Activity

- > Ask children to collect a handful of leaves from your outdoor space (from different tree species).
- > Then a small handful of twigs.
- > Using the string, they attach the leaf to the twig to create a puppet.
- > Then use chalk pens/marker pens to give their puppet some facial features.
- > Once they've created a few different puppets, have them create personalities for them based on the tree species they've used to create them.

**Examples include:** Holly leaf character - bit of a prickly personality, Sweet chestnut leaf - a kind, sweet soul etc.

- > You could then have them extend this to create little role plays for their characters based on their personalities.



# LKS2 English

## Autumn poem

### Resources needed:

- Sticky notes
- Pencils and clipboards
- Thesaurus (optional)

### Activity

- > In pairs, give children some sticky notes and pencils.
- > Send them off to hunt for signs of autumn in your outdoor space.
- > When they spot something, write down adjectives and/or noun phrases to describe what they've found

**Examples include:** crispy, dry leaves or prickly conker husks

- > They then use their collection of vocabulary and phrases to create a Haiku poem.  
This could be based upon autumn in general. or a specific tree/autumnal find that interests them, depending on what you've got available in your outdoor space.



# UKS2 Maths

## Tree age investigation

### Resources needed:

- String
- Metre stick
- Sticky notes and pens
- Tree growth chart
- Calculator

### Top tips!

If your space is low on trees, this activity would work best in your local park.

You might find it useful to have a tree ID app outside with you for this activity. The Woodland Trust has a free British trees app you can use, found [here](#).

### More information

Trees can be aged in various ways, including by using the growth rate of their girth, and looking at their rings (once cut down).

Tree rings can also be used to show significant events in that tree's lifetime e.g. drought, heavy rains, forest fire, as these all affect the growth of the tree in a given year.



# UKS2 Maths

## Tree age investigation

### Activity

#### **Discuss with children:**

- How long they think trees live.
- How the girth of a tree can help tell you its age.

Using the tree growth rate sheet and a piece of string.

- > Children work in small groups to age various trees in the space.
- > They should record these on a sticky note and then place them on the trunk of the tree (alternatively, place them inside a plastic wallet you've clipped to the tree).

#### **To measure the girth:**

- > Have children hold a piece of string around the trunk of the tree (approximately 1m off the ground) to measure its girth. Holding the string against a metre stick to find out the length they've measured.
- > Alternatively, have one child stand with the string and the other children link arms around the tree until they touch, then hold out their arms one next to the other for the child with the string to measure across the full length.

#### **To measure the age:**

- > Divide the girth by the growth rate for your tree.
- > Once they've had some time exploring various trees, as a class go around and find the oldest one measured today.
- > Discuss with children significant events that have happened in that tree's lifetime (this will depend on the age of the tree).



# Tree Growth Chart

**Holly, Yew:** 1.25cm / year

**Oak:** 1.88cm / year

**Ash, Beech, Elm, Hazel:** 2.5cm / year

**Sycamore:** 2.75cm / year

**Pine, Spruce:** 3.13cm / year

