



At this time, when we're all stuck at home for most of the day, what we'll really benefit from is getting out into nature to enjoy the fresh air and the wildlife that's all around us; whether that's in our our gardens or during our daily exercise with members of our own household. Even within a responsible 2km distance of our homes, the chances are, you'll find plenty to enjoy!

<http://www.botanicgardens.ie/>



## 1. **Appreciating Nature, all around You!**

Get yourself outside and up close with nature. Depending on the time of year, you might spot common wildflowers such as: poppies, daisies, dandelions, crocuses, buttercups, foxgloves, cornflowers, and the lovely but yuckily named different varieties of 'scabious'! (Flora, plants)

But also watch out for creatures such as butterflies—the Small Tortoiseshell is very common in Ireland and they love those big weedy Buddleia plants with their lovely hanging purple flowers! And also honey bees and bumble bees, grasshoppers, and all sorts of crawling beetles and other insects. Get down on the ground and look around up close! (Fauna, animals)

## Stop awhile and listen...



## 2. Stop a while, and Listen...

Sit somewhere outside or near a window, close your eyes and listen.

- What can you hear?
- Listen closely. Can you hear any sounds from nature?
- What are they?

You may be surprised by how many things you hear with your eyes closed, that you never noticed before!



## Stare at the Sky...



### 3. Stare at the Sky

But not at the sun of course. You don't want to damage your eyes!

Look out of the window or if you can, lie down outside and look up at the sky.

- What colour is it?
- Are there any clouds?
- What shape are they?
- Can you forecast what the weather will be like today from looking at the sky?

- Look at how the sky changes as you watch.

## Look at the Shape of a Tree...



## 4. Look at the Shape of a Tree

In your garden or local park stand or sit or lie under a tree.

- What shape is your tree?
- Is it round and fat or tall and thin?
- Does it have any leaves?
- Are the branches all the same size?
- Does the shape of the tree remind you of anything else?



Sometimes trees can look a bit like upside-down lungs. Did you know that trees and forests are often called the 'Lungs of the Earth' because we get so much of our oxygen from them?

## Touch!

Out in nature, feel a leaf, the bark of a tree, or the grass under your feet!



Notice the different textures that you touch all around you. Can you describe how they feel?

## 5. Touch!

If you are out in nature, feel a leaf, the bark on a tree, or the grass beneath your feet. Notice the different textures that you can touch that are all around you.

- Can you describe how they feel?

It could be a soft furry leaf of a *Lamb's Ear* plant, or the rough bark and *lichen* on a *pine* tree, soft spongy moss, or a spiky holly leaf! Maybe even close your eyes for a moment, while you touch some of them.

## Scents from Nature



## 6. Scents of Nature

If you have any plants growing near you, give them a sniff. It doesn't have to be a flower. Some trees and shrubs have great smells too! Some leaves will smell when you rub them.

- Do they smell nice or not?

If you can't get outside, try smelling a fruit or a vegetable. Luckily, some veggies smell much better *after* they have been cooked!

**So, out you go kids, and have fun!**

*We'll have **print-quality downloadable images** for kids, parents and teachers very soon, so watch this space. They'll look terrific on your classroom wall.*