

Nature Activities—March

Look out for signs of Spring

Go for a walk, or a look around the school grounds. Can you find:

- Leaf buds on the trees
- Flowers starting to bloom—the snowdrops have been out for a while, but look out for crocuses, daffodils, celandines (like buttercups), tree blossom....
- Insects buzzing around—bees, butterflies and more
- New lambs in the fields
- Frogs in ponds—and frogspawn
- If you're really lucky, maybe you'll see a March hare!

Take field notebooks with you and do some observational drawings of what you find—or try doing some nature photography. You could experiment with taking photographs at interesting angles, very close up etc—there are some great ideas at: <https://expertphotography.com/7-fun-photography-projects-children/>.

Make a spotter chart for your classroom wall and record when you see the signs of spring arriving—or draw onto a big map of the area around the school.

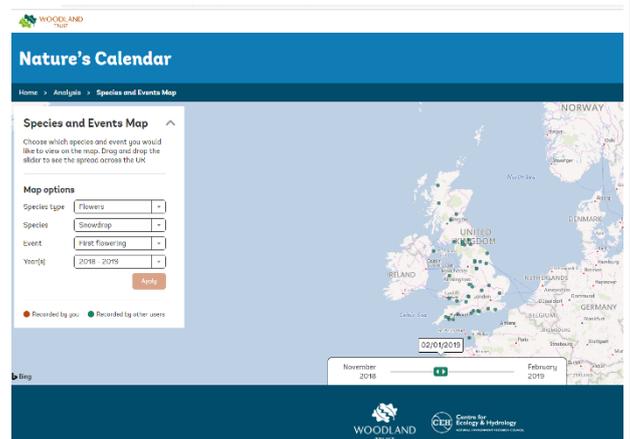


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Try Your Hand at Phenology

Phenology is the science of recording seasonal change. The Woodland Trust have a great [phenology calendar](#) to download and through their Natures Calendar project record the appearance of seasonal plants and animals.

Nature's Calendar looks at the first sightings of animals and plants each year. This enables us to track climate change. This year technically spring 2019 actually started in November 2018 due to the mild conditions, with butterflies being reported on Christmas Day 2018! You can view live maps so look scientifically at the bigger picture in your lessons, with great geography links as well as maths (statistics).



It is really simple for anyone to get involved and report a plant or animal they spotted in their garden, local park or on the way to school: <https://naturescalendar.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>

You could start a school nature diary which you add to each year—it will form a data set that you can draw for the future and a record of the environment where you live that will be valuable to future generations.



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Ready, Steady, Grow!

It's the time of year to get planting! You can find load of curriculum linked activities below—and it will all help with combatting climate change and improving habitats for pollinators following on from last month's challenge:

<https://schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk/resources>

<https://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/>

<https://www.gardeningwithchildren.co.uk/>

As if you need persuading to start growing food, one head teacher wrote an article on the positive impacts (intended and unintended) of starting a school garden plot...

<https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/teacher-blog/2017/sep/29/primary-school-garden-teaching-method-improve-pupil-behaviour>

For older children (KS2 and 3) there is the Endeavour challenge...no cost to you and it is a great way to engage children in real science

<https://stories.kew.org/endeavour/>



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Spring Senses

Now the weather is a bit better, go outside and experience the spring using all your senses

LOOK for the signs of spring

Now, close your eyes and sit quietly for a few minutes

LISTEN for birds and other spring sounds

FEEL the temperature, the humidity, the breeze

SMELL—what does the spring smell like?

If you want to TASTE the spring, maybe you could try tasting some seasonal wild garlic leaves (ransoms), eat some early rhubarb, or try spring greens or blood oranges. You could make pancakes for pancake day—and even use some of those other things as fillings!



Nature Activities—March

Spring Cleaning

If you fancy doing something good for your local school grounds, or the local area, be it a park or beach, you could consider a spring clean...

<https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/great-big-school-clean>

<https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/get-involved/support-our-campaigns/great-british-spring-clean>

<https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/get-involved/volunteer/litter-heroes>

Litter pickers for schools

<https://www.litterpickersdirect.com/environmental-education/school-tidy-ups.aspx>

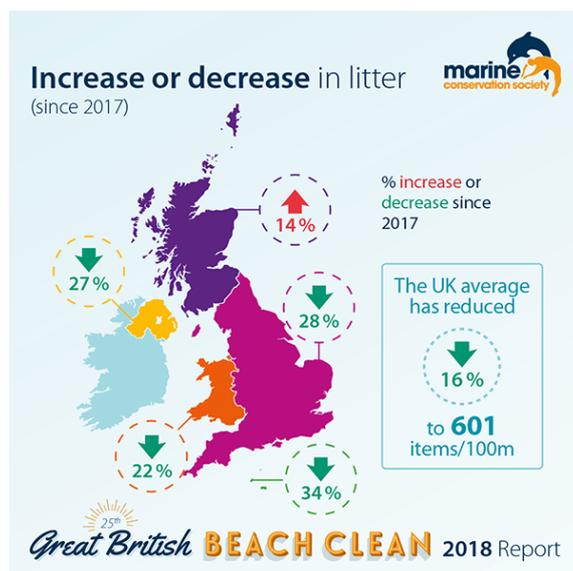
North Tyneside schools can contact Marcus Jackson, North Tyneside Council Seafront Environmental Protection Coordinator on 01916437281 to lend a set for schools for litter picks and beach cleans.

Great British Beach Clean

<https://www.mcsuk.org/beachwatch/events/gbbc>

To see the most recent findings (including a downloadable report with infographics that is great to adapt for a maths lesson in the 'real world'), there is a positive message in reduction of litter found, likely due to the vast public action response.

<https://www.mcsuk.org/clean-seas/great-british-beach-clean-2018-report>



Literacy Activities—March

Spring literacy ideas

There are a lot of opportunities around the topic of spring:

<https://nurturestore.co.uk/spring-literacy-activities-that-are-fun>

Literacy around litter – have a debate and write persuasively

Use these links like this to stimulate conversation

<https://www.tes.com/news/call-litter-picking-be-national-curriculum-rubbished>

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2018/03/20/tory-peers-proposal-include-litter-picking-national-curriculum/>

Then use own viewpoints to practise writing persuasively / for a purpose...write to an MP or to your local council (do this for real to add weight to their work after all this is real world science!)



Maths Activities—March

Visual maths

There are a lot of visual counting activities you can do of wildlife at springtime, especially birdwatching, before the leaves grow and obscure your views like later in the year. You can record numbers of wildlife and categorise them according to groups you are learning about such as mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, and fish. Visit a local pond area to cover the all the groups, or if they are missing (such as reptiles—ask why!). Or look in the pond at the range of invertebrate life that lives there.

Growing maths competitions

A good way to introduce measurement, recording in a table and graphical drawing is to have a growing competition.

A shortlist of plants that can be grown indoors can be found here, including some vegetables so you can grown your own food to eat later...

<https://getbusygardening.com/easiest-seeds-to-start-indoors/>

<https://www.thompson-morgan.com/top-10-easy-to-grow-vegetables>

Or you can choose the classic, sunflower or marrow growing.

Flower displays and counting

To link maths with this for younger children, you can use the resources such as a flower maths wall display, some examples here...

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t-n-4629-new-maths-addition-vocabulary-flower-display>

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t-n-845-numbers-on-flowers-addition-worksheet>

More on pond life and plants to come in later Dippy Challenges....



Art, Artsmark, Arts Award —March

Life cycles

As young life starts to be visible... early plants, frogspawn (and all amphibian life cycles starting up), butterflies and young rabbits, this is a great time to start looking at life cycles: Make models, a play or a representational dance around a life cycle of their choice.

Frog Life Cycle Recycled Craft Transformation



<https://buggyandbuddy.com/butterfly-life-cycle-craft/>

<https://www.easypeasyandfun.com/butterfly-life-cycle-paper-toy/>

(its really hard to find the download link but its there in normal text to click on the link)



Crest Awards —March

Crest Awards (<https://www.crestawards.org/>) are run by the British Science Association and support science work and working scientifically. Star level is aimed at KS1; Superstar at KS2 and Discovery at KS3 and all have pre-made downloadable challenges which you can put together to achieve the awards. Beyond that, Bronze, Silver and Gold levels give more scope for individual projects. We are working to produce a Crest accredited challenge for when you visit Dippy at the Great North Museum: Hancock to make up one of these activities on your journey. The awards are cheap to do (£1 per child for Star and Superstar and £3 each for Discovery) and you can record the activities online to get the children's certificates and badges.

Investigating Nature Challenges

Star (<https://www.crestawards.org/crest-star>)

Superstar (<https://www.crestawards.org/crest-superstar>)

Wormcharming



Things to look out for in March

early butterflies:

peacock,
brimstone,
speckled wood



spring flowers,



young rabbits,



Frogspawn



Noisy Rooks in
their treetops



Coastal gannets



Chiffchaffs eating the
newly emerged insects
and singing from tree
tops in sunny woods

