

# Nature counts

This activity helps children to become aware of the diversity of plant and animal life in a small area of the nature reserve. Children will be introduced to the concept of plant surveys.

## Resources

- Pad of paper; pen or pencil and a ruler per pair of children
- 4 pegs to stick in the ground and at least 14 feet or 4.5m of string
- Magnifying glasses
- Plastic bags to sit on
- Cameras

## Activity

Take some time to wander through the nature reserve and begin to focus on the many plants and insects to be found there. The meadow area is a good place for this activity as it is rich in wild flowers during the summer months and is the area being developed as a traditional hay meadow as part of the Flowers in the Vale project.

Working in pairs children find a spot and put the sticks in the ground to make a square metre. Then they take the string and run it around the outside of the pegs to mark out the area to explore.

Remind the children to take care of the plants to avoid damaging them.

Explain that the task is to observe the many different plants and insects they can find in their square. They should write them all down on their pad. If they do not know the name they can write a description, draw a diagram or take a photograph.

After 10 minutes each pair of children should count up how many items they have on their list and then discuss together the similarities and differences between the things they have found. e.g. How many legs do the spiders and beetles have? Which plants grow low on the ground and which are taller? How many petals are there on each flower? Are the leaves on different flowers the same shape and size?

## Follow up

- Back at school remind the class of the similarities and differences between themselves and then discuss why they think there is so much diversity in plant and animal life. Were the children surprised at how many different plants they found?
- The children can use field guides and the internet to learn the names of the plants and animals they found. [www.buglife](http://www.buglife) and [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk) have good resources.



Visit [CVCg.org.uk](http://CVCg.org.uk) for more activity sheets and information about our nature reserve

