



# Learning in your forest

## Forests for insects... insects for forests



23  
to  
29  
JUNE  
2014

LITTLE THINGS  
THAT RUN THE WORLD

Forests are great places to look for insects, especially during the summer months, when you will probably see butterflies, moths, bees, ants and all sorts of beetles. The Forestry Commission manages the nation's forests to provide many different habitats for insects and other wildlife. Insects are really important in the forest ecosystem – many are food for other animals, and some are helpful to the forester, because they protect the growing crop of trees from pests.

During your visit to the forest, look out for the insects on this sheet – and learn more about them and their jobs in the forest environment.



### Ladybirds

Ladybirds are beetles.

They can be red, yellow, brown, cream and even black, but all have spots of a different colour.

The Forestry Commission grows trees to provide timber – ladybirds are the forester's friends, because most of them eat aphids, which cause damage to plants and trees.



**Try  
this...**

**Look for ladybirds in the forest today – how many different colours can you find?**

### Beetles

Ground beetles, bark beetles and stag beetles can all be found in the leaf litter and dead wood on the forest floor.

The Forestry Commission often leaves dead wood in the forest to provide habitats for beetles and other wildlife.



**Try  
this...**

**Look under the bark of dead tree trunks or branches – the tunnels and carved lines you can see were left by the bark beetle grubs as they fed.**



### Bees

There are many types of bee. All bees help to pollinate plants, while they are collecting nectar from flowers, but not all bees make honey.

Some bees live in groups, while others live on their own – these are called solitary bees.



**Try  
this...**

**If you see a bee, follow it from a distance to see which flowers it visits or if it returns to a hole in the ground where it may be nesting.**





### Wood ants

Ants live in large groups or communities and should be easy to find – there are an average of 500 wood ants in every square metre of forest!

Wood ants live in nests that look like piles of pine needles. In each nest is a queen. She is looked after by worker ants, who can sometimes be seen carrying food back to the nest or travelling in long lines.



Try  
this...

Pretend you are ants – make a line of people and pass pine cones (or anything else you find) down the line to carry back home with you.

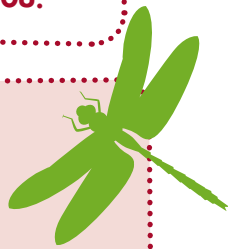


### Dragonfly

The dragonfly spends the first part of its life under water as a nymph. After it has grown large enough it crawls out of the water and emerges as a dragonfly. The forest is not all trees – it is managed by the Forestry Commission to provide a whole variety of different habitats including ponds and streams.

Try  
this...

Find a pond or stream in the forest then sit quietly and look for dragonflies and damselflies.



### Butterfly

Did you know that butterflies suck nectar from flowers with a long mouth part like a straw? As they travel from flower to flower collecting nectar, they help pollinate plants just like bees, moths and some wasps.

Try  
this...

Collect small sticks, leaves, stones, petals and cones from the forest and design your own butterfly picture on the ground.



### Moth

Moths come in a variety of different colours, patterns and sizes. Most fly at night, but some fly in the day. Moths are an important food source for bats and birds.

Try  
this...

look for small brown day-flying moths in open sunny areas of the forest.

Find out  
more...

To find out more about how the Forestry Commission looks after your local forest, and the other public forests in England, please visit:

[www.forestry.gov.uk/england-learning](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-learning)

On the webpage, you can also complete a short survey to tell us what you think of this activity - we'd love to get your feedback.