



## Nature library catalogue

To support you selecting nature-related stories, this handy catalogue of books provides a starting point and ideas of themes that can be tackled through books. However, this is only a small selection of what is available, and local texts and anything that you can get your hands on in the library (or from parents and carers) can be effective too.

### Big feelings

#### **A Shelter for Sadness by Anne Booth**

Themes: dealing with big feelings (sadness)

Reading age: 5+ years

Summary: A small boy creates a shelter for his sadness, a safe space where Sadness is welcome, where it can curl up small, or be as big as it can be, where it can be noisy or quiet, or anything in between. The boy can visit the shelter whenever he needs to, every day, sometimes every hour, and the two of them will cry and talk or just sit, saying nothing.



#### **Bird Boy by Matthew Burgess**

Themes: being yourself, birds, bullying

Reading age: 4-8 years

Summary: Nico was new, and nervous about going to school. Everyone knew what to do and where to go, but Nico felt a little lost. So, he did what he loved to do: Watched the insects, sat in the grass, and most importantly... befriended the birds. Before he knew it, Nico was known as BIRD BOY. But Nico didn't mind. Soon, he made one friend, then two, as the other kids learned to appreciate Nico for who he was. Before long, Nico learned he could be completely, delightfully, himself.

#### **Fatima's Great Outdoors by Ambreen Tariq**

Themes: bullying, facing fears, immigrant experiences

Reading age: 4-8 years

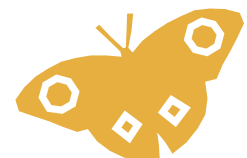
Summary: Fatima Khazi is excited for the weekend. Her family is headed to a local state park for their first camping trip! The school week might not have gone as planned, but outdoors, Fatima can achieve anything. She sets up a tent with her father, builds a fire with her mother, and survives an eight-legged mutant spider (a daddy longlegs with an impressive shadow) with her sister. At the end of an adventurous day, the family snuggles inside one big tent, serenaded by the sounds of the forest.

#### **Watercress by Andrea Wang**

Themes: facing fears, immigrant experiences, intergenerational connection

Reading age: 4-8 years

Summary: Driving through Ohio in an old Pontiac, a young girl's parents stop suddenly when they spot something growing in a ditch by the side of the road...watercress! With an old paper bag and some rusty scissors, the whole family wades into the muck to collect as much of the muddy, snail-covered plant as they can. At first, it's embarrassing. Why can't her family get food at the grocery store? But when her mother shares the story of her family's life in China, the girl learns to appreciate the fresh food they foraged. Together, they make a new memory of watercress.





## Slowing down and taking notice

### **Slow Down: Bring Calm to a Busy World with 50 Nature Stories by Rachel Williams**

Themes: slowing down, appreciating nature, nature facts

Reading age: 3-6 years

Summary: All around us, nature is turning, growing and working. Every day, hour by hour, magical transformations happen right in front of you. Go outside and explore... see what you find when you take the time to slow down. Reading like a story book, but filled with facts about real-world animals and nature, this the perfect introduction to the world of wonder on your doorstep

### **Big Hedgehog and Little Hedgehog Take an Evening Stroll by Britta Teckentrup**

Themes: slowing down, appreciating nature, facing fears (darkness, night time)

Reading age: 4-5 years

Summary: It is evening and the big and little hedgehog are slowly making their way home. There is so much to see, and the little one wants to take it all in. Each step of the way the big hedgehog patiently asks, "What are we waiting for now?" The little hedgehog's answers unfold in a series of lush landscapes as the two animals wait for the sun to set, for birds to fly by, for the moon and stars to appear, and for the world around them to prepare for sleep.

### **Nature Trail by Benjamin Zephaniah**

Themes: exploring an environment, biodiversity, taking notice

Reading age: 2-5 years

Summary: All around us, from parks to gardens and flowerpots to pavements, there's a world of wonder just waiting to be discovered. Why not look a little closer and see what you find? This joyful celebration of nature reminds us all to take a closer look at the world around us, and enjoy the wonder of nature wherever we find it. Packed with animals and minibeasts galore, this imaginative rhyming text is perfect for reading aloud.

### **Colours: A Walk in the Countryside by Rosalind Beardshaw**

Themes: exploring an environment, colours, taking notice

Reading age: 2-3 years

Summary: A young girl and boy play in the countryside, finding ladybirds and butterflies, birds and flowers, before sitting down for a nice picnic. Finally, after a lovely day spotting animals, they sit down beside the river and gaze up at a wonderful rainbow.

## Facing fears and discomfort around nature

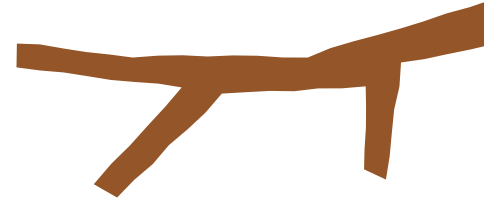
### **Darwin's Super-Pooping Worm Spectacular by Polly Owen**

Themes: underappreciated nature, nature facts, science and history

Reading age: 6-9 years

Summary: Learn the funny and fascinating story of Charles Darwin and the groundbreaking discoveries that resulted from his love of the humble worm in this hilarious, illustrated children's book. Told for the first time for children, this is the silly and fascinating true story of how Charles Darwin came to discover that the humble earthworm is the most important species on our planet.





### **How to Make a Bird by Meg McKinlay**

Themes: birds, inspiration from nature

Reading age: 4-6 years

Summary: We shadow the protagonist as she contemplates the blue print of an idea, collects the things that inspire from the natural world to shape a bird. And breathes life into it before letting it fly free. It shows how small things, combined with a little imagination and a steady heart, can transform into works of magic.

### **A Little Bit Worried by Ciara Gavin**

Themes: facing fears (weather)

Reading age: 3-6 years

Summary: When Weasel is caught in a big, angry storm, he builds a fortress to hide in. But then he meets Mole, who loves to play in the wind and splash in the rain. Can Weasel learn to overcome his fears and find joy, whatever the weather?

### **The Wilderness by Steve McCarthy**

Themes: facing fears (the unknown, the outdoors), nature connection

Reading age: 3-7 years

Summary: The Vasylenko family are adventurers. They all love the wet and the wild, the thrill of exploring the outside world. All that is... except Oktober. He prefers the warm and safe comfort of the inside world, and for his adventures to take place between the pages of a book. But tomorrow, Oktober has to join his family on a trek into the slimy, grimy and climby wild, where he sees only danger and worry and fears a creature called "The Wilderness"!

### **I Love Bugs by Emma Dodd**

Themes: facing fears (insects), appreciating nature

Reading age: 4-8 years

Summary: A large, bright, creepy-crawly bug safari through a little boy's garden, with a final spread which shows how we often react to them. A book to intrigue, demystify and reassure young entomologists, as even the scariest insects are given friendly faces, and shown flying near or crawling on the boy.

### **Cyril the Lonely Cloud by Tim Hopgood**

Themes: appreciating nature, reframing negative perceptions (rain)

Reading age: 3-5 years

Summary: As Cyril the cloud drifts alone through the skies, all he wants is to see a happy face smiling up at him. Instead, he is confronted by frowns and angry glares, as everyone blames him for spoiling their day. He floats over picnics, campsites and open-top buses, knowing that everyone on the ground would rather he went away. This simple picture book is touching and thought-provoking, clearly demonstrating the importance of rainwater so that the planet to thrive.





## Understanding habitats and growing

### **Rosa's Big Sunflower Experiment by Jessica Spanyol**

Themes: plant life cycles, benefits of plants, science

Reading age: 2-5 years

Summary: Rosa and her friends are growing sunflowers. The industrious team of children fill pots with soil, tenderly plant seeds and then carefully label and position their plants. As they go along, they research and discuss the process - how seeds germinate, what they need to thrive and how they will benefit the insect community. Eventually their efforts pay off and they can admire their row of glorious golden sunflowers.

### **When the Bees Buzzed Off! by Lula Bell**

Themes: habitats, nature facts, ecosystems

Reading age: 3-6 years

Summary: A group of bugs are alarmed when they realise that all the bees have disappeared from their garden. So, a clever worm, brave caterpillar, determined beetle and amusingly gloomy snail set off in search of their missing friends. They journey through vegetable beds, damp leaf litter, across the pond, and past the garden fence into the woodland beyond, until finally they hear a welcome buzz!

### **A Good Place by Lucy Cousins**

Themes: habitats, biodiversity

Reading age: 3-6 years

Summary: Four insect friends – a bee, a ladybird, a beetle and a dragonfly - decide to look for a new place to live together. Yet, as soon as they think they've found somewhere good, they realise that the new place has a problem. A butterfly shows the insect friends a beautiful garden that a little boy has made: at last, here is a good place for all the friends to live.

### **Lots: The Diversity of Life on Earth by Nicola Davies**

Themes: biodiversity, nature connection, conservation

Reading age: 6-8 years

Summary: *Lots* is a story-based introduction to the concept of diversity and how there are all sorts of different organisms living on our planet, from the enormous to the teeny tiny, and how there are probably more things alive than we even know about.

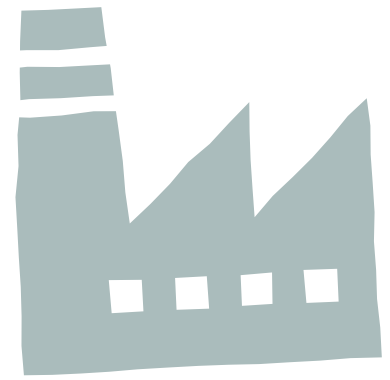
## Taking action

### **Follow the Moon Home by Philippe Cousteau & Deborah Hopkinson**

Themes: taking action for nature, collective action, conservation, oceans

Reading age: 6+ years

Summary: When Viv moves to a new home and school, she feels rather shy and disorientated. Then she discovers that her local beach, on the South Carolina coast, is a loggerhead turtle nesting area. She spots that some baby turtles are dying and not making it to the sea - but why? And what can she do to help?



### **Our Tower by Joseph Coelho**

Themes: urban nature, access to nature, special places, community

Reading age: 4-5 years

Summary: A deeply personal story written by the award-winning poet Joseph Coelho, drawn from his own experience growing up in a high-rise and looking for adventure. Three children living in the building travel to a strange, magical world inside a tree and meet an old man with supernatural powers... only to realise that the magic they'd been looking for had been in the building all that time, in the form of community and connection.

### **Dear Earth by Isabel Otter**

Themes: taking action for nature, intergenerational connection

Reading age: 3-6 years

Summary: When Tessa writes a love letter to the Earth, it's the beginning of a glorious adventure. She blows bubbles with whales, soars with birds and joins in with the noisy rainforest hullabaloo! Tessa wants everyone to know how special our planet is. She believes that there is a chance to save the Earth if enough of us share the message.

### **Anywhere Farm by Phyllis Root**

Themes: taking community action, access to nature, grey to green

Reading age: 4-6 years

Summary: When a little girl decides to create an "anywhere farm", she tenderly plants a seed in a tiny patch of soil in an empty yard. She then watches and waits patiently, taking care to water and weed, until at last a shoot pushes its way up through the soil. As the seedling grows, so does the community. Her neighbours are inspired to plant their own seeds, using anything they can find, from pots, pans and cups to an old shoe. What was once an empty, barren space is now a thriving community farm, bustling with life, laughter and friendship.

### **Errol's Garden by Gillian Hibbs**

Themes: taking community action, access to nature, grey to green

Reading age: 4-6 years

Summary: Errol loves gardening, but he doesn't have a garden and is fast running out of space to grow any more plants in his family's flat. Then he comes up with a very creative solution, thanks to the discovery of a disused area at the top of his apartment block. After a bit of research and consultation, he sets out to transform the grey and neglected space into a magical celebration of flowers, plants and vegetables. And along the way, Errol also brings together the entire community.

