



Hedge and bush habitats

Mapping hedges and bushes is part of the *Mapping your site* activities, enabling you to explore and map the habitats your site currently offers for nature. Understanding your starting point is really important and will allow you to measure any nature gains you achieve when you start making enhancements to your site. Mapping hedges and bushes is one of eight habitat mapping sessions in this unit of learning.

Before mapping any habitats, these introductory activities have been designed to support learners in distinguishing between trees, shrubs and heathland, identifying wildlife-friendly shrubs, and understanding proportions. This knowledge will enable them to answer the questions in the *hedges and bushes habitat flowchart* accurately.

These activities can also be used as standalone activities, promoting a positive connection with nature.

Teaching time

60 Minutes

Learning outcomes

To identify the difference between trees and shrubs.

To identify key species of shrubs.

To learn about hedge and heathland habitats.

To understand their role and contribution to mapping the habitats on their site as part of the Education Nature Park.

Curriculum links

Science:

Working scientifically Recording data using tally charts and classification keys

Living things and their habitats Recognise that living things can be grouped in a variety of ways; give reasons for classifying plants based on specific characteristics.

Step by step

iNOSE Trees, hedges, shrubs and heathlands (5 minute activity)

The purpose of this activity is to support learners to appreciate the distinction between trees, shrubs, hedges and heathlands.

1. Select one of the four habitat features (trees, shrubs, hedges or heathlands) and slowly read out the seven clues.
2. If and when the learners think they know the answer, they place their finger on their nose, identifying 'iNOSE'!

Green Skills



Suitable for

Key Stage 2

Key Stage 3

Location

Indoors and outdoors

Season

Spring

Summer

Autumn

What you'll need

A printed map of your site

A tablet, laptop or desktop PC to access the Habitat Mapper tool online

iNOSE Tree, hedge, shrub and heathland statements

Native and non-native shrub top trump cards

Wildlife-friendly shrub proportion activity sheet

Clipboards

Drawing materials

Key vocabulary

Observation

Identification

Shrub

Hedge

Heathland



Step by step (continued)

3. If a subsequent clue makes them unsure, they remove their finger from their nose.
4. Start with more difficult, general clues, and make them gradually more obvious.
5. Repeat with the other three habitat features in turn.

Support and extension

- For younger learners, you may wish to display an image of each of the four features (even better if they are images from your own school grounds).
- Extend this activity by going out into the school grounds to spot these features.
- Learners might enjoy drawing each feature as you read out the statements.

Shrubs Top Trumps

Top trumps is an effective way to help learners compare items. In this version of top trumps, learners can compare shrubs by how 'wildlife-friendly' they are.

1. Begin by discussing what the term 'wildlife-friendly' means. Support learners by highlighting how different plants can provide shelter, protection from predators, food in terms of leaf foliage, flowers (pollen and nectar) and fruits, nuts and seeds.
2. Learners can either work in pairs (or teams to save printing) to compare and rank each category out of 10 depending on which shrub is most wildlife-friendly. This part of the activity should take no more than 10 minutes.
3. The pairs / teams can then share out the top trump cards and play:
 - a) The first person chooses a category on the card at the top of their pile, e.g. tasty leaves. If their card has a higher score than their opponent, they 'win' their opponent's card. If it is less, they give their card to their opponent.
 - b) Players take turns until one player has won all of the cards.

While all shrubs support wildlife, this activity can be used to help learners identify important wildlife-friendly shrubs. For example, all of the native shrubs in the top-trump game can be identified as 'important' wildlife-friendly shrubs.

Hedges and shrubs flowchart

1. Now head outdoors to a space on your site that has hedges or bushes.
2. Encourage learners to use the flowchart, and the knowledge they have developed through the *iNOSE* and *Top Trumps* activities, to follow the flowchart and identify the hedge and bush habitats. Use the below wildlife-friendly shrub proportions activity if learners need help determining proportions or percentages.
3. Educators can work with learners to draw each area or line of habitat on to the printed map, or (if you have internet connectivity outdoors) directly onto the online map using the Habitat Mapper tool.
4. Repeat the flowchart for each separate area of hedges or bushes on your site, until you have mapped them all.
5. Back indoors as a whole class activity, transfer the habitat areas from your paper map onto the online Nature Park map using the Habitat Mapper tool. If you already did this outdoors, check and review your map with the class.

Wildlife-friendly shrub proportions

Why not use shrubs as a resource for learning about proportions? This simple 5-minute activity challenges your learners to identify the proportion of their sample that is wildlife-friendly.

1. Remind learners of the term 'wildlife-friendly' from the *Top Trumps* activity. Ask the learners what clues they might look for to identify whether a shrub is wildlife-friendly (broad leaves, flowers, fruits, nuts, foliage for shelter).
2. Ask the learners to think about how they might divide up their sample into ten parts (e.g. if there are five equal sized shrubs, they would have ten half shrubs).
3. Learners can then shade in the proportion of the shrub sample that has wildlife-friendly shrubs.



National Education Nature Park and Climate Action Awards

Reflection

Encourage students to reflect on the types of shrubs they discovered and consider how these plants can benefit both wildlife and people. Think about aspects such as acting as a windbreak, providing habitats, reducing noise and pollution, offering shade, serving as a food source, connecting different parts of a site to enable animals to move around, or serving as nesting places.

Discuss how human activities, like the timing of hedge trimming, could impact these benefits. Explore potential ways to enhance the hedge and shrub environments on their site.



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