



Mapping hedges and bushes

Hedges and bushes can provide brilliant habitats and wildlife corridors for a range of wildlife, from birds and insects to mammals.

This session will guide learners through a series of activities and discussion, supporting them in identifying types of hedges and bushes before using a flowchart to identify the exact habitat, which will form an important piece of your overall Nature Park map.

Teaching time

up to 60 minutes

Learning outcomes

- describe some differences between trees and shrubs
- recognise common shrubs in wildlife hedges
- use a branching key to classify different types of hedge and bush habitat

Step by step

INOSE

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

Read out the seven clues for one of the four habitat features slowly (trees, shrubs, hedges or heathlands).

If and when learners think they know which feature is being described, they must place their finger on their nose, identifying 'INOSE'! If a subsequent clue makes them unsure, they remove their finger from their nose.

Start with more difficult, general clues, and make them gradually more specific. Repeat with the other features.

Shrubs Top Trumps

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

Begin by discussing what the term 'wildlife-friendly' means. Highlight how different plants can provide shelter, protection from predators, food in terms of leaf foliage, flowers (pollen and nectar) and fruits, nuts and seeds.

Learners can either work in pairs (or larger 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.

The pairs / teams can then share out the cards and play. 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. Players take turns until one player has won all of the cards.

Green Skills



Suitable for

Key Stage 2
Key Stage 3

Location

Indoors
Outdoors

Season

Spring
Summer
Autumn

What you'll need

Printed flowcharts and activities

Clipboards

Drawing materials

Tablet, laptop, or computer to access the online Habitat Mapper tool

Printed map of your site, if you do not intend to use the Habitat Mapper outdoors

Key vocabulary

Observation

Identify

Shrub

Hedge

Heathland

Step by step (continued)

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 this game can be identified as important wildlife-friendly shrubs.

Using the flowchart

After completing these activities, head outdoors to an area with hedges or bushes. Depending on how much support learners need, if you have multiple areas of this habitat you may wish to separate learners into groups and ask each group to investigate a different area – this will help you to map multiple areas in one session.

Each group can use the Hedges and bushes habitat flowchart, answering each question to reach a decision on which habitat they have. Encourage learners to use the knowledge they have developed through the INOSE and Top Trumps activities. Use the below proportions activity and accompanying worksheet if learners need help determining proportions or percentages.

Repeat the flowchart for each area of hedges or bushes on your site, until you have identified them all.

If using a printed map of your site: ask learners to draw and label the habitat they have just identified on the map. If using the Habitat Mapper tool on a mobile device: educators and learners can work together to accurately draw the habitat on the map.

If you used a printed map, remember to add the habitats identified to the Nature Park map using the Habitat Mapper tool when you are back in the classroom. This is a really important step to ensure your site and your observations contribute to real-world, groundbreaking research by the Natural History Museum into nature recovery.

Wildlife-friendly proportions

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

Remind learners of the term 'wildlife-friendly' from the Top Trumps activity. Ask learners what clues they might look for to identify whether a shrub is wildlife-friendly (for example, broad leaves, flowers, fruits, nuts, foliage for shelter).

Ask 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).

Using their worksheet, learners can then shade in the proportion of the shrub sample that is wildlife-friendly.

Reflection

Encourage learners to reflect on the types of shrubs they discovered and consider how these plants can benefit both wildlife and people. Some examples may be: acting as a windbreak, providing habitats, reducing noise and pollution, offering shade, serving as a food source, or providing 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 site.



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