

More activities...

- 1** A mushroom is the fruiting body of a fungus. While mushrooms grow above ground, fungi are mostly found beneath it. They love damp conditions and feed on anything that was once alive. Think of them as nature's cleaning-up team!

Did you know that we use fungi to help us in our everyday lives? We need them to help us make medicine, cheese and bread! How cool is that?

- ★ How many different types of fungus can you spot today? Be careful though... some mushrooms are poisonous, so never eat any you find growing in the wild!



- 2** Keep an eye out for footprints, holes and scratch marks in the soil where the badgers have been digging for juicy earthworms. Sometimes heaps of excavated material can be found outside the entrance holes, made up of soil and old bedding material.

- ★ What does a badger's footprint look like? See if you can find out.



- 3** Between 1871 and 1885 Marianne painted more than 800 paintings, while visiting 17 countries on six continents in 14 years. All while travelling alone in Victorian dress! She painted in oils.

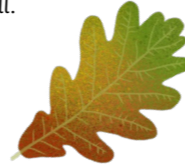


- ★ Do you think you could capture the image of a plant during your visit today?
- ★ What resources might you need to do this?
- ★ Experiment with different methods – how do your pictures look?

- 4** A deciduous tree is one that loses its leaves over winter. Trees use a green pigment called chlorophyll to photosynthesise – this means they produce sugars from the energy of the sun, using water and nutrients from the soil. This is what gives trees the energy they need to live and grow.

This process slows down in autumn and reveals all the other chemicals and colours in the leaves that were hidden by the presence of the dominant green chlorophyll. As the trees become dormant for the winter they let their leaves fall.

- ★ Collect some fallen leaves and compare their shapes and colours.



- 5** Holly bushes are a haven for birds and small mammals in the colder months as they give dense cover and protection. The dry leaf litter acts as a snugly bed for hibernating hedgehogs. Birds and small animals feast on the berries.

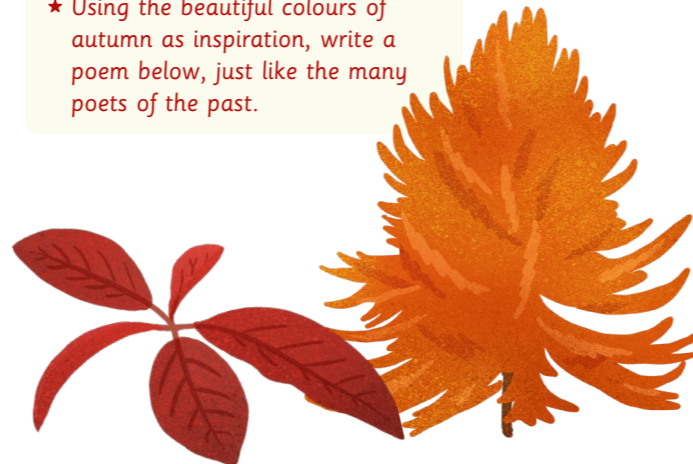
- ★ Along this pathway you might see lots of interesting seeds and their cases. Start collecting them as you walk along.
- ★ Observe their differences. Some are prickly and some are smooth. Perhaps you could use them to make a 'collage' or sculpture when you get home.

- 6** The wood of the Katsura is very soft and light. It is used for making gobans (boards for the game Go), furniture, cardboard boxes and other toys.

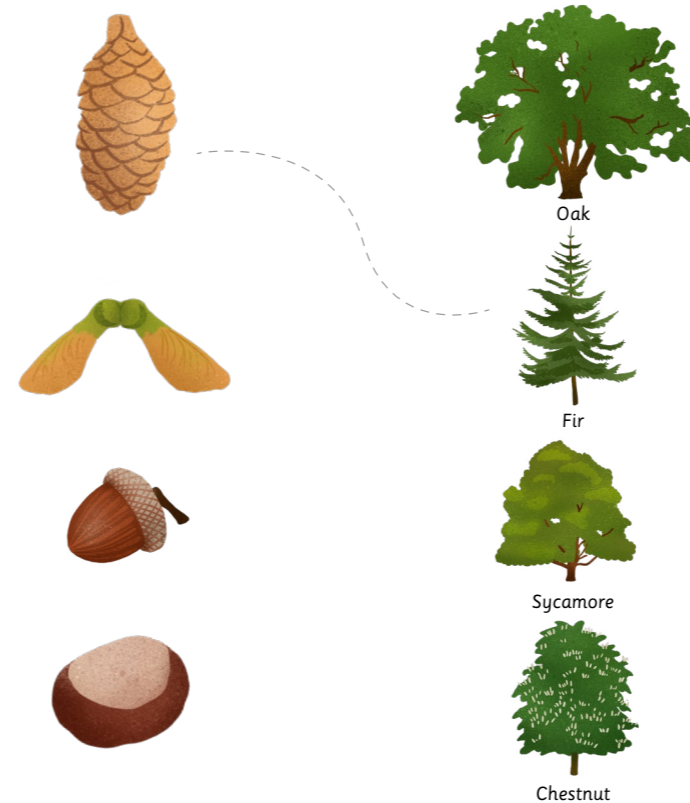
- ★ What would you make with the wood?

- 7** Particularly stunning in autumn, the leaves of Chinese tupelo trees (*Nyssa sinensis*) turn deep red, while the leaves of black tupelo trees (*N. sylvatica*) turn red, orange and yellow. In fact, in this spot you can see the whole rainbow of colours!

- ★ Using the beautiful colours of autumn as inspiration, write a poem below, just like the many poets of the past.

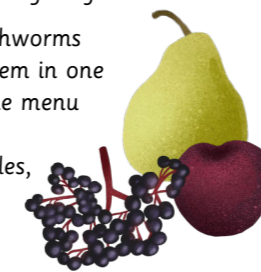


- 8** ★ Have a look at the seeds and trees around you. Can you work out which seed belongs to which tree?



- 9** Today, there are between 35 and 40 badger setts in our Gardens. The underground burrows are dug out by the animals, with several entrances leading to a labyrinth of rooms inside, used as food stores, sleeping chambers and nests. The rooms are lined with grass, straw, or dead leaves – the perfect place for badgers to sleep and rear their young.

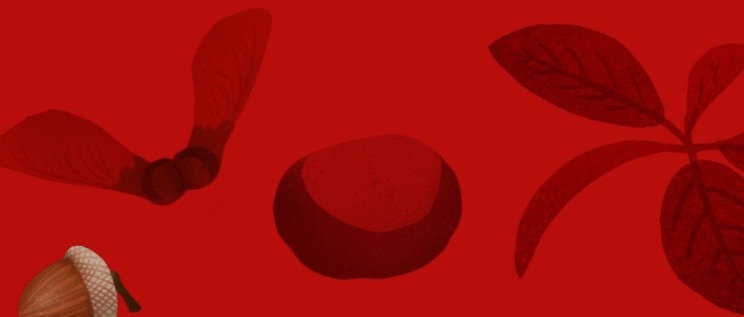
A badger's favourite food is earthworms and they can eat hundreds of them in one night alone. Second choice on the menu is slugs and other invertebrates. They also love fruit – pears, apples, plums and elderberries make the perfect dessert!



- ★ When is the best time to go badger spotting? See if you can find out and see a real badger for yourself!



- 10** ★ The Woodland Walk is a wooden pathway. Can you find out which tree the wood came from? ★ Can you find that tree growing in the woodland?



Start at Victoria Gate

As you exit the ticket barriers, you will see a pathway straight ahead of you. To the left is an incredible tree cloaked in vibrant autumn reds. This is the chittamwood or American smoke tree.

1 Look carefully all around the bottom of the tree.

- ★ Can you spot any fungi? You can see these strange-looking outcrops all over Kew during the autumn months, so keep your eyes peeled as you walk around today.
- ★ Have a look at the ground, the trunks of trees and even the branches. Can you see any colourful lichen? This is another type of fungus.

Tick the box when you have completed this section of the trail

↪ Turn over to find out more about fungi.

Keep walking straight past the smoke tree and along the bottom pathway. Keep a lookout on the right hand side and you will spot a badger's sett.

2 These black and white creatures are nocturnal and shy, so tend to hide during the day and come out soon after dusk, returning to their setts before dawn. Kew has been home to these wild European badgers (*Meles meles*) since the 1980s, when they came here from the neighbouring golf course!

- ★ Can you see any evidence of badger activity? Maybe you can see where they've been searching for worms near their sett.

↪ Turn over to find out more about badgers and the evidence they might leave behind.

Keep walking along this pathway until you get to the Marianne North Gallery. Pop in!

3 The Marianne North Gallery was designed and built by Marianne North to house her paintings, which she gifted to Kew. Marianne was a remarkable Victorian artist who travelled the globe, recording the world's flora with her paintbrush. Can you find the America section? There you'll see some tree paintings with beautiful autumn colours.

Exit the gallery and straight ahead you'll see a pathway that leads to the Temperate House.

- ★ See if you can find a vibrant American tree in front of the gallery like the ones that Marianne North painted.

↪ Turn over to find out more about Marianne North.

Walk through the Temperate House and the Davies Exploration House until you come out of the other side. Look up and in the trees you'll spy the Treetop Walkway. Head straight on until you reach it.

4 Now it's time to test your head for heights! Climb up to the high walkway.

- ★ Imagine you're a bird high up in the tree canopies. Stop and listen to the wind in the leaves.
- ★ Have a look at all the different shapes and colours of the leaves. Does Kew look different from up here?

↪ Turn over to find out more about why leaves change colour.

It's time to come back down to earth! Return to Holly Walk. Turn left and walk slowly up this path.

5 Holly Walk was planted in 1874 and there are over 30 varieties of holly (*Ilex*) growing here.

- ★ Have a good look at their prickly, evergreen leaves and bright red berries – but don't touch them or you may get a shock!
- ★ Can you see the beautiful autumn crocus flowers that grow along this pathway?
- ★ What are some good describing words for their vibrant purple colour?

↪ Turn over to find out more about holly.

Carry on up Holly Walk and keep straight on over the Fiveways crossing. Keep going straight and soon you'll hit the grassy Syon Vista.

6 Now it's time to follow your nose and see if you can catch the scent of the Katsura tree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*) It releases a delicious scent of toffee apples.

- ★ Can you smell it? It reminds us that autumn is the time of harvest.

↪ Turn over to find out more about the Katsura tree.

Continue up the Syon Vista away from the Palm House in the direction of the Lake. On your left you'll see the Sackler Crossing, which traverses the Lake. Walk halfway along the bridge.

7 The Sackler Crossing is the first bridge to be built across the Lake. It was placed here in 2006. There are four islands in the Lake, which covers five acres of water.

- ★ Take a moment to pause amongst the magnificent colours and beautiful reflections.

↪ Turn over to find out more about the trees you can see here.

When you reach the other side of the Lake, go to the main pathway and turn right. Continue along this path. You will soon find yourself in a forest of fir trees.

8 These fir trees really differ from the deciduous trees that you saw from the Treetop Walkway. The fir trees keep their thin needle-like leaves all year round. They have adapted like this to survive harsh weather.



Key

- Trail route
- Free wi-fi hotspot
- Baby-changing facility
- Snacks and drinks
- Wheelchair-accessible toilet
- Shop

- ★ Why not add some fir cones to your seed collection?

↪ Turn over to play our match the seed and tree game.

Continue to walk along the path and eventually you'll see a sign for the Giant Badger Sett. Follow this until you find it!

9 Now's your chance to experience how badgers live for yourself! The tunnels in our Giant Badger Sett are at least a metre high, with one tunnel large enough for wheelchairs.

- ★ Imagine you're a badger in its dark underground home.
- ★ What does it smell like? What is it like to come out into the light after being in the dark? What do badgers eat?

↪ Turn over to find out more about how badgers live.

Continue up the woodland path until you reach a pathway on your left. Turn onto this and continue until you reach the Woodland Walk.

10 The Natural Area was donated to Kew by Queen Victoria on the condition that the area remains in a wilder, untamed state. The Woodland Walk is a raised trail that takes you through the Natural Area without disturbing the habitat.

- ★ Can you spot the beech trees in this area? The squirrels love collecting the beech nuts and burying them for their winter stores.
- ★ Skip like a squirrel along the Woodland Walk.

↪ Turn over for a challenge.